

Claiming Miss Granger

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Claiming Miss Granger

by [pet](#)

Summary

Hermione Granger has always been powerful, but when she turns twenty and starts presenting as an Omega a year before she comes into her full magical inheritance, Molly and Ron Weasley decide the best way for the young witch to please her new fiance is for him to take her magic. But when Lucius Malfoy discovers that Hermione is his magical mate, his inner Alpha emerges to protect what belongs to him.

Please read all tags and warnings!!!

Notes

This was inspired by a facebook post in the Strictly Lumione group, asking for recommendations for ABO Lumione fics, of which there aren't many. Well, now there's one more. Story is complete at five chapters and will be updated weekly! (Don't worry: they're long chapters...well, long for me anyway)

Again, I will direct your attention to the tags and warnings! Graphic depictions of violence, attempted rape, brutal death, kidnapping, sex (later), knotting, and all that fun stuff. Don't like, don't read, and don't say I didn't warn you!

Thank you to my wonderful betas!!! (Red and xXxOrrery)

Chapter 1

She walked into the Department of Magical Law at the Ministry with a smile on her face, a small diamond ring on her left hand. Though she knew it was insipid of her to continually inspect the thing, she couldn't help but peek down at it every few minutes. Hermione Granger just couldn't believe that Ron Weasley could be that romantic.

Yesterday was the first of September, and Ron had asked her to dinner. They went to a cosy Italian restaurant in Diagon Alley and enjoyed way too much pasta and wine. At the end of the meal, he took her hand and spoke more confidently than she'd heard since they'd fought You-Know-Who just over a year prior.

"I can't tell you how happy you've made me, Hermione. This past year was so hard without you around, and now that we're living together, things are just so much better. Eight years ago, you barged into my compartment asking about a toad, interrupting a conversation. Today, I'm offering you the opportunity to interrupt me for the rest of our lives. Will you marry me, Hermione?"

She said, "yes," and he pulled out the ring while the patrons nearby congratulated them. Since that moment, she'd had a smile plastered upon her face. Now that she was at work, she knew she needed to get down to business; there was a rather large piece of legislation she was working on with her partner. However, whenever her ring was within her field of vision, she couldn't help but look down at it.

"Staring off into nothing, Granger?" came the sarcastic voice of her partner. "Never took you for the type to... Oh no."

"What?" she asked, turning to him.

He took her left hand. "You said 'yes' to that wanker? I thought you had more sense than that!"

"Draco Malfoy!" she scolded. "He's not a 'wanker', and you know it."

"Alright, fine. You're right. Happy now?"

"Very."

Over the course of the previous school year, Hermione and Draco had become friends. It had taken until the Christmas Hols for them to even speak to each other during what became known as their "Eighth Year," but once the dam broke, friendship flooded them. They shared many interests and their sharp wit was unmatched by any other in their year. They partnered on most projects and spent many late nights in the Library. When Draco married Astoria Greengrass two weeks after finishing school, she was his "Best Mate."

Lucius Malfoy had not seemed pleased when his son informed him of the decision to eschew tradition. Hermione was going to stand up with Draco, and there was nothing the older

wizard could say to dissuade them. What Draco didn't know was that Lucius was proud his son had such an amazing friend. The Muggle-born witch had stood up for both Malfoy men at their trials following the war, and it was due to her testimony that either were in a position to be attending a wedding. If not for her, they both would be wasting away in Azkaban prison. Appearances needed to be kept, and so he put up the front of not being happy.

Draco knew better, of course. They'd discussed Hermione Granger over many a glass of firewhisky. His father often accused him of harbouring a soft spot for the witch and while he may have been right at one point, Draco knew they were too alike to ever be more than just friends.

Plus, there was Weasley.

"It was really romantic," Hermione said, interrupting his thoughts. "We had dinner at that Italian place by Gringotts, and he proposed in front of all those people. Said when he first met me, I'd interrupted a conversation he was having, but he wanted me to keep interrupting him for the rest of our lives."

He nodded. "That actually is rather sweet, for him."

She shoved him playfully and the two got to work.

~*~

The nineteenth of September started out a bit strange for Hermione. Her hair wouldn't calm with the usual styling spells she used, so she resorted to a traditional Muggle hair tie to keep it back and out of her face. Apparating to the Ministry ended with her landing on her bottom rather than the smooth transition she usually enjoyed. When she attempted to file some paperwork across the office and instead made a mess of files on the floor, Draco spoke up.

"Bit of trouble today?"

She sighed. "Yeah. A bit off. I think I'm just nervous."

"For?"

"I think Ron is throwing me a surprise party for my twentieth and he knows I hate surprises."

He looked askance, but eventually agreed with her.

At the same time Hermione and Draco were talking, Ron was indeed planning a party. He'd gotten his mother involved in the affair and decided to spend the day working with Molly to get everything ready while Hermione was at work. He'd been placed in charge of décor while his mum cooked.

"Are you making those creampuffs Hermione likes so much?"

Molly smiled. “You know I am. Actually, why don’t you come round here and give me a hand.”

Ron moved from his place in the doorway between the living room and kitchen around the table to help his mum. She was working on the puff pastry dough, and she showed him how to use his wand to put the ingredients together. They quickly developed a system.

“Hermione was a bit off this morning,” Ron said by way of conversation. “She couldn’t get her hair charms to work right.”

Molly paused. “She’s how old today?”

“Twenty.” After a heartbeat, he continued, “You don’t think...?”

“I do. It’s common for Muggle-borns to begin presenting on their twentieth birthday...” she trailed off.

“If they’re Omega’s,” came Ron’s hushed conclusion.

Molly and Ron shared a look.

“How...” Ron stammered. “How can we...? I mean, is there a way to be certain?”

“You need to potion her, Ronald,” Molly claimed, getting excited. “There’s no way she’s not an Omega, and now that she’s twenty, we can prove it! Imagine all that magic and prestige in our family!”

“But how can we do it without her knowing? If we go through with this and she notices her aura, you know as well as I do that she’s going to question it. Then we’ll have to explain what it means and —“

“So, we Obliviate her! The aura only shines for a few minutes. We can slip the potion into a creampuff, and once we know, we can Stun her and Obliviate the memory. After a moment, we’ll wake her up and make it seem like no time at all has passed. It’ll be perfect! Then we’ll know, and we can plan.”

“But what about everyone else who’s coming?”

Molly swallowed. “We wait until after,” she said with finality.

He looked unconvinced. “Do you really think it will work?”

“Absolutely. I’ll make all the arrangements; you just bring her over for dinner.”

“Thanks, Mum.” Ron took a deep breath and hugged her.

“An Omega Weasley...”

The next morning, Draco came into the office to find Hermione nursing a headache. Her head laid against her forearms, leaning against the blank surface of her desk. He'd been at her party the night before but didn't think she'd had all that much to drink. There was no reason for to be hungover unless she'd hit the bottle hard after he left. It would be odd if she had; she never got pissed on work nights.

"Alright, Hermione?"

"Ugh. I feel like I drank an entire bottle of Ogden's Finest."

He furrowed his brow. "Unless you found a bottle after I left, I highly doubt that. Did you have anything stronger than Butterbeer last night?"

She shook her head and said, "That's the strange part. There's no reason for me to feel like this! First, my magic goes wonky yesterday morning, then Ron was being strange when I got home, and Molly acted barmy during the party. Now I feel hungover without even the benefit of the night out drinking!"

"Your magic was only off in the morning?" he asked.

"Yeah. It calmed down just after lunchtime. Why?"

"Curious." He scrutinized her a bit too closely before offering her a Pepper Up Potion and redirecting her back to work.

Every day for the next two weeks proceeded the same way. Hermione would get up and head out to work long before Ron needed to leave for the joke shop. Her days were packed with legislative reviews and consultations. She'd see Harry for lunch some days, Harry and Ginny on others, and twice, Draco had joined them for a meal in the cafeteria when there wasn't too much paperwork to do, and they both could escape together. It was a rarity, so they enjoyed it when they could. The disconcerting part was the strange looks she often caught Draco giving her when he thought she wasn't looking.

She came home on a Friday in early October to find Ron sat at the kitchen table with his mother. The two had a slew of books and what looked like greeting cards splayed out on the table before them, leaning their heads close together and pointing things out to the other. A tea service sat on the edge of the table, the sugar bowl hiding under a magazine.

"What's all this?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, Hermione, dear!" Molly said, waving her over to the only empty seat at the table. "We were wondering when you'd be home. Come take a look and what I've brought."

They were planning her wedding.

“Now, you know Arthur and I will gladly host the ceremony. We can use the tent from Bill and Fleur’s wedding; it’s the same one we used for Harry and Ginny’s. It can be made smaller or larger, depending on how many people you decide to invite. Ron and I were talking, and we agreed that a Valentine’s Day wedding would be nice, but the full moon is later that week, so the nineteenth would be the perfect day.”

“I was thinking Christmas,” Hermione stated.

“Oh!” came Molly’s startled reply. “That really doesn’t give us as much time, only a couple months away. I mean, we can do it,” she said as she began to rearrange papers before her.

“Not this year. Next year.” Ron and Molly gaped at her. “I turn twenty-one next September, and I’d really like to reach my magical maturity before I get married. Everything I’ve read said that it makes the bond stronger. Plus, I don’t see the need to rush things. I mean, we only got engaged a little over a month ago.”

Molly stared, gathered up her things, and told them she’d let them discuss it and come back later, leaving the table littered with wedding paraphernalia.

Ron looked at her. “That was rude, Mione. She’s only trying to help.”

“Yeah. Help plan OUR wedding! Don’t you think I should have some say in these decisions? I mean, I AM the bride.”

They turned to the trappings laid out before them, taking about fifteen minutes to work out a colour scheme, a theme, and which parchments they would use for the invitations. Hermione relented on the venue; might as well save money where they could and have the wedding at The Burrow. Plus, Molly was a great cook. They circled back around to the date for the ceremony, and Ron kept pushing for an earlier wedding date.

“I don’t understand why you want to wait so long!” he cried.

“I gave you my reason! Several times! Don’t you want this bond to be as strong as it possibly can?”

“You know I do! But we can have an immensely strong bond even if we married now!” He paused.

“Oh no,” she warned.

“Why not?”

“I am NOT eloping, Ronald Weasley! I want the gown, the guests, the shoes, flowers. The whole lot!”

They argued for another ten minutes before Ron seemingly relented. “Christmas of 2000. We can look at the lunar calendar tomorrow.”

“Good,” she agreed. “I’m knackered. I’m going to get a shower and head to bed.”

Once she was clean, Hermione pulled on her sleep shorts and a tank top and climbed into bed. She turned on her side and realized that Ron was already in bed, something that was not the norm for him; he usually stayed up at least an hour after she did. *Maybe he's tired*, she thought as she drew the covers up around her shoulders. Before she could get comfortable, he reached out and pulled her close. She felt his hands come up and wrap around her as his mouth descended upon hers. They kissed for a minute, Ron doing his best to deepen the kiss before Hermione felt the insistent press of his erection against her hip.

"Ron, what are you doing?" she asked, trying to pull away from him.

"Come on, Mione," he said between pecks, pulling her back into him.

"Stop," she pleaded as her hands pushed at him.

He didn't stop right away, instead kissing her for another minute and only giving up when she became unresponsive.

"Geez, you're like a dead fish when you do that."

She huffed as he angrily turned his back on her. Rolling over to put her back to his, she huffed again and tried to get comfortable. The encounter left her feeling troubled, making it almost impossible for her to fall asleep. She tossed and turned for forty-five minutes before Ron huffed again, complained about her constant movements, and left the bed to get a bath.

The next morning Ron behaved as if nothing untoward had occurred the previous evening. They fell back into their regular routine of Hermione going to bed about an hour before Ron. She began to think that maybe she'd imagined the interaction in bed that one night ... At least she did until a week and a half later when Ron came to bed while she was in the shower.

He turned the covers down just enough to show that he wasn't wearing a shirt. The smile on his face was probably meant to be sensual, but Hermione thought he looked somewhat constipated instead. He patted the bed beside him.

Hermione hesitated. She had a feeling that this was going to be another attempt to get into her knickers, and she wasn't having it. "What are you doing?"

"Come on, Hermione. We're engaged! Why can't we have a bit of fun?"

"I don't mind sharing a bed with you," she said, "but I'm really not ready to take that next step."

He huffed. "Don't you trust me?"

"It's not a matter of trust," she claimed from her place in the doorway.

"Then why not?" He was getting angry, the tips of his ears tinging pink. "I know you slept with Harry while I was away from you on the Horcrux hunt!"

"I did not!" She was seething, clenching her fists in anger. "You know that!"

“I don’t know,” he spat. “You were awfully chummy with him.”

She threw her hands up and yelled, “I’m a virgin, Ron! Honestly!” Turning on the spot, she Apparated away, landing in the foyer at Malfoy Manor. A small house elf greeted her.

“It’s being very late, Missy Granger, but I’ll tell Master Draco you’re here.”

“Thank you, Delly.”

“You’re waiting in the Library?”

Hermione nodded and walked across the foyer and down the hall to her left. She pushed open the solid oak door and allowed herself to relax into the ambience of the stacks. It took only two minutes for Draco to find her, curled up on a wingback chair near the fireplace, an old copy of *Hogwarts, A History* on her lap and tears in her eyes.

“What happened, love?”

She told him the whole story, starting with the strange looks she got at her birthday party. She included coming home to find Ron and Molly planning her wedding, mentioned Ron being a bit more forceful that one night, and then finished up with the events of tonight and Ron’s subsequent comments. “He knows I want to wait for marriage. He’d have a go at me about it even before we got engaged, calling me old fashioned and saying that Muggles are all prudes! So I don’t understand why he would say these things to me today.”

Draco looked like he wanted to say something, but instead offered her a room to stay for the night or however long she wished. Astoria was already in bed asleep, and Lucius was in Switzerland on business for the week. She thanked him but decided to return home for the night. If she was going to marry the man, then they needed to be able to talk things through and work them out without running from their problems and letting things fester. They hugged, and she Apparated back to her flat.

Ron was gone.

~*~

“Weaslebee still being a ponce?”

Hermione smiled at Draco. With all the insanity of her life, her job, and her fame for being “The Brains Behind Harry Potter” or some tripe, he was her only constant. She always knew where she stood with Draco Malfoy, good or bad.

Ron spent that night at The Burrow and came home in the morning apologetic. He’d told her that his mum had set him straight and he would no longer behave that way. While she didn’t like the idea of Molly Weasley being privy to the inner workings of her relationship, at least

the older woman had sent him home in the right frame of mind. Ron had been near perfect since that morning.

“I’d hardly call perfect behaviour ponce-like.”

“It’s out of character. We both know it.”

“You’re right...and don’t get a big head about that!”

They laughed together before getting back to work. Draco really was right, and it almost hurt Hermione to admit it. For three weeks since the night Ron had accused her of sleeping with Harry while on the run, Ron had been the picture of a perfect boyfriend. The Stepford Boyfriend, she mentally called him. It was unsettling even though she tried to forget about it and just hope that maybe Molly really had set him straight that night.

As the workday ended, Draco called to her, “Just remember that I’m here when he finally goes back to normal.”

“Oh yeah, Malfoy. I’m sure Astoria would simply adore sharing you with me.”

They laughed as Draco headed for the Floo and Hermione walked to the Apparition Point.

~*~

The first thing she noticed when she got home was that all the lights were out. Ron usually beat her home at the end of the day, but there was no sign of him anywhere. She walked through the flat, putting her things away and turning on the lights on her way to the kitchen. It was a long day, and she’d only had a few minutes to eat lunch, so she was anxious to get in there and make a meal with the chicken she’d pulled out that morning. When she turned on the kitchen light, she found Ron sitting at the table with a bottle of firewhisky open in front of him, an empty tumbler near his right hand.

“You spend too much time with that Malfoy prick,” he slurred.

She sighed and attempted to placate him. “I was working. I’m sorry I worked a little later today, but you know how my workload is around the Yule.”

“I don’t want you working with him.”

“Really? I’ve worked with him for months, and only now you have a problem?”

He scoffed. “He doesn’t like you, you know. He’s after your power. They all will be.”

She furrowed her brow in confusion. He was quite obviously drunk and had no idea what he was talking about. That had to be it...

“He won’t get it, though. It’s mine. Have the spells and everything.”

Now she was certain he was completely pissed. “Okay, Ron. I think that’s enough to drink.” She reached across the table to pull the bottle from him. “Why don’t you hea –“

With speed she didn’t know he possessed, his right hand flew out and snatched her wrist from the air before she took hold of the bottle. His grip was fierce, but not nearly as deadly as the look in his eyes. The bottle fell from the table, spilling its contents across the kitchen floor as Ron stood and dragged her closer to him.

“I won’t let him take my power,” Ron said.

“Ron, you’re hurting me,” she cried.

“Not hurting. Protecting.”

He turned from her and dragged her out of the kitchen and down the hall toward their bedroom. She tried to fight him off, to pull herself away from him, but her five-foot-four 135-pound frame was no match for his six-foot-one Quidditch-toned self. Hermione felt like a rag doll behind him and her heart sunk lower into her stomach the closer they got to the bed. Her logical brain failed her, fight or flight becoming the onus of her mind. Reaching the doorway, she braced her legs and left hand against the doorframe, trying to keep him from pulling her inside and executing whatever plan he’d concocted. This backfired; as he yanked her right arm, she felt the bones shatter, the pain causing her to release her hold on the doorframe.

“That’s your own fault,” he said. “I didn’t want to hurt you, but you just had to go and make this difficult.”

“Let me go!” she screamed, still fighting.

His left hand sailed through the air, connecting with her cheek in a sickening backhand that had her seeing stars. “It’ll be better for you if you don’t fight,” he said as he threw her down on the bed.

He must not have realized how hard he tossed her, because the momentum caused her body to bounce once and then careen off the other side onto the floor, her head hitting the nightstand on the way down. Her vision tunnelled and her head throbbed. She heard him mutter a curse before he appeared at her feet, stepping around her to grab her hair. A scream was torn from her throat when he grabbed her by the hair and threw her back on the bed.

“This would be easier if I could use my wand, but I can’t contaminate the magic,” he said.

Distantly, she was thankful that she’d chosen to wear trousers that day rather than one of the skirts she preferred. He reached out and fussed with the button and zip on her bottoms, fighting for a few seconds before choosing to simply grasp the fabric and tear. She tried to sit up, scooch away from him, hit at him all at the same time, but he backhanded her again.

“I can’t knock you unconscious either. It’ll negate the transfer of your Omega powers.”

She had no idea what he was talking about but knew that whatever it was, she wanted nothing to do with it. She attempted to fight more, but between the multiple blows to her head, she was seeing triple. Instead, her left hand lashed out, smacking and scratching everything she could feel, hoping she was doing enough damage to gain her freedom and escape from this nightmare.

His hands closed around her left arm, and he yanked it down toward her knees, pulling the shoulder out of its socket before he knelt on her hand. “Stay.” With her limbs secure, he reached up and tore her knickers from her body.

Fear overtook her as he settled between her thighs, but in the seconds it took for him to reach between them and take out his cock, her magic erupted from within, knocking him off of her and clear across the room. He hit the wall with a resounding thud. Not wanting to see if he was alright, she fell from the bed and Apparated.

~*~

The sterile white of the ceiling clued her in to exactly where she was: St Mungo’s Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries. She didn’t move as she tried to figure out what happened and how she’d gotten there. The last thing she remembered was Ron shattering her left arm.

“She’s awake!” called a voice nearby. “Get the Healer!”

“What... Where...”

“Shh. Don’t talk,” said the voice, a male voice she thought. “I’m here, and Potter will be right back.”

Draco.

A Healer came in, a younger woman who appeared only a few years older than Hermione, and began casting diagnostics, carrying on a running dialogue of her findings. “Well Miss Granger, your cranial swelling has gone down, your concussion mostly cleared, and the bruising around your head and face is completely gone. There’s no residual tearing from your dislocated left shoulder, and your right radius and ulna have finished regrowing. There may still be damage to some of the soft tissues and muscles, but we wanted first to address the major injuries. Now that you’re awake, we can get on that. How do you feel?”

“He...” she started and then stopped. “I was...” She paused again. “Did he rape me?”

“No, Miss Granger. There is zero evidence of any sexual penetration, and your hymen is still intact.”

Hermione nodded, a single tear falling down her left cheek. It was followed quickly by another, and within a matter of seconds, she was sobbing into her hands.

“Thank you, Healer Selvig. I’ll call you back in when she’s ready.”

“Thank you, Mr. Malfoy.”

The door closed, and Hermione felt herself being pulled into Draco’s arms. At first, she wanted to resist, but her senses were overcome by his scent, and she relaxed into him. There was something soothing about his presence that she couldn’t quite place. Mercifully, he allowed her to cry for a while before he began questioning her.

“What do you remember?”

“I came home from work, and the lights were off,” she began, starting a somewhat disjointed commentary. “But he was home. Drunk? Oh no,” she lamented. “My floor is covered in firewhisky.”

Draco chuckled. “It’s alright. I’ll send Delly over to take care of your place.”

“He grabbed me when I tried to take the bottle. Dragged me down the hall. I remember trying to brace myself on the door frame, but he pulled me in. I think I hit my head? He was talking, too, but I don’t remember what he was saying...” She trailed off and was quiet for a minute. Then she turned to Draco. “Did you come over? How did I get here?”

“You Apparated to Malfoy Manor. My house-elves thought you were dead and when I saw you, I almost agreed with them. Scared the shite out of all of us. Astoria covered you up while I Floo’d a Healer. You were transported here by emergency Portkey.”

“When?”

“Four days ago.” He swallowed. “I’m so sorry, Hermione. I don’t know what all happened, but you were in rough shape, and I thought I’d lost you.”

At that moment, Harry walked in wearing full Auror robes. “I’m ecstatic to see you’re awake, but I’m going to need to take your statement, Hermione. Unfortunately, due to your injuries, I need to use Legilimency to pull up the memory of that night and extract it. It will be rather unpleasant for you, I’m afraid, but I promise to be as quick and painless as possible.”

“Is it safe?” Draco asked.

“Yeah. I already cleared it with her Healer.”

Hermione signed and attempted to sit up, which she did with Draco’s help. “Get on with it.”

Harry drew his wand and performed the spells necessary. He searched through her memories until he came to that night, then drew them forward and exited her mind. It took only thirty seconds from then to pull the memory out and seal it in a vial for evidence. After placing it in his robes, he pocketed his wand and hugged her. “I’m so sorry, love. I wish I could kill the bastard.”

“Thanks, Harry.”

“I promise to come back later, but right now, I need to take this to the Ministry. Time is of the essence.”

“I understand. See you later?”

He nodded, kissed her forehead, and bid them goodbye.

When it was just her and Draco in the room, she turned to him. “What’s an Omega?”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Thanks to GaeilgeRua for her awesome beta work! (See? I got your name right! lol)

Also, HEED THE WARNINGS!!! You have been warned...

I suck at waiting; all chapters have been beta'd and I don't want to draw this out for weeks on end. Updates will be every few days.

It was two weeks since Ron attacked her; Hermione had spent the first week in Hospital and the second in Malfoy Manor. Though Harry had offered to house her recovery at Grimmauld Place, neither she nor Draco were comfortable with that arrangement. Ronald and Molly Weasley had full access to the Black ancestral home, but more importantly, Ginny Weasley was pregnant and due any day with her first child. Draco took her into his home and plied her with all the sweets and books her heart desired.

He also plied her with information on the unspoken magical hierarchy.

The Weasley's were Beta's, she discovered, and the entire family had been since the beginning of Magic. Even witches and wizards who married into the family were Beta's. Within the magical hierarchy, Beta's were the typical magical being, the normal magical signature. Just over ninety-five per cent of the magical population were classified as Beta's.

Four per cent of the population was made up of Alpha's, all of them at least half-blood. These were your business leaders, top politicians, and captains of industry within the Magical community. Within their magical aura was the power to lead and influence policy, peace, and everything in between. The Malfoy men were Alpha's. Hermione asked if Harry was an Alpha, but Draco laughed.

"Nah. He's just a lucky Beta. I told you: most witches and wizards are Beta's. There's nothing wrong with it, just like there's nothing wrong with being a man or a woman. It's who you are."

She knew there was a lesson in there about his old blood purity beliefs, but she refrained from giving the lecture and pointing out his hypocrisy. It was a conversation for another day.

Omega's were rare, making up less than one per cent of witches and wizards. By far, they were the most powerful people on the planet, their magic capable of providing balance and stability to any situation they desired. More than three quarters of the witches and wizards who had been Minister for Magic were Omega's. They were smart, level-headed, and natural problem solvers.

At first, Hermione was alright with being an Omega, but the more she read, the more concerned she became. There were passages about presentation, which Draco told her happened at age twenty-one for Muggle-borns and eighteen for half-bloods and pure-bloods. Her magic would build up inside of her, become increasingly stronger the closer she got to her birthday. There were ways to control the ensuing outbursts that involved potions, but most texts she read suggested becoming bonded; the best outlet was sex.

Knowing she was a virgin, Draco provided her with books on the benefits of being a mated Omega. She could mate with any witch or wizard she chose by simply completing a ritual, the words of which were oddly close to the Latin she remembered Ron chanting when he was assaulting her. Some words didn't match up, and she made a note to ask Draco about it later if she didn't find the answers herself in one of the books before her. Mating would stabilize her magic and allow her to continue on with life as usual. However, if she managed to find an Alpha to mate with, both would receive a magical boost. Due to the rarity of Omega's though, the majority of Alpha's tended to mate early on in their maturation.

When she exhausted the collection of books, she called upon Draco, but sadly, he didn't have anything else to offer from his own knowledge.

"Sorry, Granger," he said. "I wish I could tell you more, but apart from saying that I claimed Astoria on our wedding night, I don't know how else to help you."

"Damn," she replied. "That's alright. I suppose I could –"

A new voice entered the conversation. "What is this about claiming?"

"Father!" came Draco's surprised response. "I didn't realise you'd returned from Venezuela."

"Just back, actually. I heard a feminine voice that most certainly did not belong to my darling daughter-in-law, so I came to investigate. I thought for a moment you'd perhaps taken a mistress," he added.

Hermione immediately turned to chastise the older wizard, but when she looked at his face, she could see the mischief playing around his eyes. He was teasing them.

"Miss Granger, I was most distressed to hear of the attack upon your person. I trust you're convalescing well here with us?"

She gaped. "Umm. Thank you, Mr. Malfoy. Yes. Everything has been fantastic. Thank you." His appearance flustered her, and she couldn't quite figure out why; this wasn't their first meeting since the War. Hell, it wasn't even their twentieth!

"Father, perhaps you can assist us. Hermione has some questions about the magical hierarchy that I can't answer."

He looked down at her, giving her a look that fairly screamed indulgence. "Allow me a few moments to freshen up from my travels and then perhaps we can enjoy lunch on the terrace while I answer?"

“But it’s January!” Hermione exclaimed.

He rolled his eyes. “Are you a witch or not?”

She hung her head in mild shame that she’d forgotten about Warming Charms and agreed to meet him for lunch in an hour. He left the room and she sat with Draco for a few moments longer before he, too, excused himself. In the time before she needed to move, she collected her notes and rearranged them into a more cohesive rhetoric for discussion. The books had answered most of her questions, and Draco answered a few more, but there were some that were apparently beyond him. Looking at the clock, she saw it was almost noon. A kitchen elf popped in and announced lunch on the terrace, so she stood and went.

Lucius stood from the table upon seeing her. “Miss Granger,” he said, pulling out her chair. “Forgive my rudeness, but I am quite famished. Would you mind terribly if we ate first and then I answered your questions?”

“Not at all! I thank you for offering your knowledge.”

Lunch was roast chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, and steamed vegetables. The elves provided butterbeer and pumpkin juice, and the two ate in companionable silence. When the dishes were cleared, Lucius sat back in his chair and heaved a sigh.

“Where do you wish to start?”

“What is the importance of an Omega witch maintaining their virginity?”

Whatever it was he had been expecting, it surely hadn’t been this if the colour on his cheeks was anything to go by. He looked mildly uncomfortable before schooling his features and speaking in a clinical voice.

“Before we get into all that, what do you know about magical inheritance?”

“I know that it’s a bit like puberty, only it happens a bit later in life. Pure-blooded and half-blooded witches and wizards come into their full power on their eighteenth birthday, while Muggle-borns don’t inherit until they turn twenty-one. This is believed to be due to the fact that they come from non-magical parents and, therefore, require more time for their magic to fully settle.”

“Correct,” confirmed Lucius. “Now, are you also aware that those same ages are when a witch or wizard can lay claim to any title bestowed upon them?”

“I was not, but it makes complete sense. How would anyone expect a person to claim regency or power if they’ve not yet achieved their own full power?”

“Brightest witch of her age, indeed.” There was a hint of pride in his voice, but it was gone when he continued. “I’m certain you’re also aware that there are evil people in the world.” He flashed a sardonic smile.

“Yes. I think I knew that somehow,” she replied sarcastically with a smile of her own.

“It isn’t as common now as it was in the past, as young people are having sex at younger ages. However, there was a time when Omega’s were sought to provide a magical boost to Beta’s who weren’t held in the highest levels of society. That additional power and prestige, the prestige that came from mating with an Omega, elevated their status. By utilizing dark magic and claiming an Omega’s virginity, they drained the majority of the Omega’s magical core, making themselves near-Alpha strength.”

“But if Omega’s are so coveted, why don’t parents or guardians arrange protection for them at a young age?”

“Because there’s really no legal way to guarantee a person’s magical distinction until they come of age.”

Hermione paused. “‘No legal way.’ So, there is a way?”

“Yes,” he sighed. “There is a potion that can be administered in the year before a person reaches magical maturity. Many of the ingredients are among the most restricted non-tradable goods, and if the potion isn’t brewed correctly, it is deadly.”

She made a note to research the potion. “Now, what does claiming entail? And what happens to an Omega witch when she reached maturation and isn’t claimed? Or mated? Or whatever the proper term is?”

“Claiming and mating are two entirely different things. Claiming is the common term, and the common practice. To be an Alpha or Omega and find your mate is even more rare than an Omega Muggle-born.”

“Are Omega Muggle-borns that rare?” she interrupted.

“Oh my yes. If less than one per cent of the populace are Omega’s, then less than one per cent of *them* are Muggle-borns. They are the proverbial needle in the haystack. The Jewel of the Nile. The Arc of the Covenant, if you will. An Omega Muggle-born who maintains purity until magical maturation is a gift from Merlin himself.”

Feeling distinctly uncomfortable, she shifted topics. “What are the punishments for a wizard who attempt to forcefully take the virginity of an Omega?”

“If it can be proven?”

She nodded.

“Death. But again, it would need to be proven. There would need to be evidence of the assault and proof the witch in question was an Omega. I can provide you with the legal documentation if you’re truly curious, though I’m certain you could procure the books from the Ministry yourself.”

While he didn’t frame it as a question, she answered nonetheless. “I’ll check the Ministry first, and if I need further resources, I will let you know.”

“Now, what else is on your mind?”

Hermione swallowed. “You said there’s a difference between claiming and mating?”

“There is. An Alpha can claim any witch or wizard and create a bond that will last through life and beyond, just as an Omega can be claimed by an Alpha or Beta and still have that same bond. However, there is one true mate for every Omega. Should they be fortunate enough to find each other... Well, it would be a union blessed by magic itself, a union unlike any other. It is rare, but when it happens, it’s epic.”

“But wouldn’t an Omega in heat draw every Alpha around? I don’t understand why Omega’s aren’t more protected.”

“If an Alpha has claimed their partner, they are immune to the call of the Omega. It’s magic’s way of protecting the Omega from barbarianism. The Omega’s true mate will stop at nothing to protect and claim them, including murdering anyone who tries to keep them apart.”

“It sounds very animalistic, heats and mating and rivalry.”

“To an extent. From what I understand, the Omega’s heat isn’t like that of another animal, but rather an intense need to be cared for and made comfortable. There’s no nesting or incoherence. Your Omega client isn’t going to go mad with sexual frenzy or jump on the first person they see.”

He thinks I’m researching for work? She was confused but didn’t want to correct him. The fewer people who knew about her predicament, the better. From everything he’d told her, she was in no danger from random men on the street. Well, unless that man was Ron Weasley. It was a weight off her mind.

“As much as I’d love to educate you more, I do have some work to follow up on from my trip.”

“Oh! No, I’m sorry, Mr. Malfoy,” she said, checking her watch. “I didn’t mean to keep you so long. Thank you for your time and assistance!”

“Any time, Miss Granger.”

~*~

The Law Library within the Ministry of Magic turned out to be exceedingly helpful in researching laws about Omega rights and protections. Lucius had been correct when he’d mentioned how few Muggle-born Omega’s there were; she’d thought he was exaggerating. She also noted that when he’d told her murder was the punishment for raping a virgin Omega, he wasn’t lying. It was considered worse than using an Unforgivable. Azkaban was too good, and the execution was historically public and messy.

After a month of obsessing over the ins and outs of the magical hierarchy, Draco mentioned that perhaps she should step away. Yes, Ron had assaulted her, even mentioned the term

Omega, but there was no proof she was an Omega and therefore, no legal recourse other than what had already been meted out upon him.

She still lived at Malfoy Manor. The thought of ever walking into the flat she'd shared with Ron filled her with terror to the point that she had Draco and Harry return there for her belongings. Oddly enough, Ron had been there when they arrived, and he merely sat on the couch and watched the telly while they cleaned her things out. He never said anything, never apologized, never even acknowledged their existence. Her suite of rooms within the Manor were about the same size as her small flat, and she had access to the best library in all Great Britain. Plus, the food was phenomenal. If she didn't stop eating so much, she would need to purchase new clothing!

Living in Wiltshire meant that she was far removed from the ins and outs of the Weasley family. Ginny and Harry welcomed their baby, a boy they named James Sirius, on the twenty-fifth of January. By the end of February, the young family was ready to welcome visitors. Draco encouraged her to go see them, to get away from the Manor, the Ministry, and her research. So, she did.

"I can't believe you're a dad!" she said to Harry. "It doesn't seem like we're old enough, but at the same time..."

"At the same time, I feel about eighty."

Hermione held young James for an hour and a half while he slept, and Ginny took a bath. She talked quietly with Harry about life as a parent, married life, and life in general outside the spectrum of fame. More importantly, she talked to him about his magical inheritance.

"That's actually one of the reasons we got pregnant so quickly: Ginny and I are actually about as perfect mates as you can be without being Alpha and Omega. We weren't trying, but we claimed each other on our wedding night, and here we are!"

"So, Beta's can claim Beta's, Alpha's can claim anyone, and Omega's can only be claimed?"

"Pretty much, yeah. You working on a case?"

James started fussing in her arms, nearly drowning out her reply of, "Something like that."

~*~

"You're right, Draco."

He smirked from his place across the office from her at the Ministry. "I usually am."

"Prat," she scolded playfully, tossing a crumpled piece of paper at him. "I need to stop obsessing over this magical hierarchy stuff. It even invaded my time with baby James yesterday!"

“Join Astoria, Father, and I for lunch today.”

“What?”

“You need something to take up your oversized brain, so come join us! You can see how pure-bloods behave in public.”

Hermione laughed. “I know how you lot behave in public, and it’s a right sight better than it was when we were kids!”

“Ha. Ha.”

“Alright. When are we leaving?”

“In about five minutes. Clean your files, and we can head out.”

The lunch turned into a regular weekly affair, usually with just Astoria and Draco, but occasionally with Lucius as well. When he was away on business, meals were more informal, and conversation flowed about life and friends. The times when Lucius dined with them, they patronized more upscale restaurants and bistros, even venturing out into Muggle London a time or two. Hermione found that Lucius was a wealth of magical law information, and a couple of his suggestions made their way into her pet projects. She spent six months working on patent law and found a way for a cataloguing system she’d devised for the Manor to be patented and sold to libraries all over the world. It wasn’t something she ever thought about sharing, and wouldn’t have had Lucius not pushed her to it.

Every few weeks, she would see Ron or Molly around Diagon Alley. Ron would smile, start toward her, look confused, and then walk away. She couldn’t be certain, but she thought it was a side effect of his punishment for assaulting her. On the other hand, Molly often had a snide comment muttered under her breath as she passed. Sometimes it was about her blood status, occasionally about what she did to Ron, but mostly it was directed toward the company she kept. Hermione had a sneaking suspicion that Molly was at the root of Ron’s attack, but she couldn’t prove it.

July rolled around, and Draco and Hermione were on their way out of the Ministry to join Lucius for lunch. Astoria wasn’t feeling the greatest, so she declined the invitation. (In reality, Draco told her to stay in bed and let the elves take care of her.) They were walking away from the Ministry’s Muggle frontage when a voice spat at them from behind.

“Harlot,” came the scathing voice of Molly Weasley.

Hermione sighed and tried to pull Draco away. Better to not feed the trolls. But it was the voice of Ron which made her stop and turn.

“Apparently she’s too good for us now, Mum,” he said. “Jokes on her; she didn’t know how good she had it.”

“Excuse me?” Hermione asked. “I didn’t realise that beating your fiancée and then attempting to rape her constitutes good treatment!” Her blood pressure rose.

“Don’t know what you’d waited for, since obviously you gave it up to Malfoy. Bloody Alpha ferret can’t be happy with just one witch, could he?”

“Go away, Ronald.”

“I don’t think I will,” he said, stepping closer. “I’d really hoped we could be happy together. Our children would have been so powerful! Then again, their mum wouldn’t have been able to teach them much...”

Draco reached out, took Hermione’s hand, and tried to pull her away. “We’re going to be late to lunch, and they’re not worth your anger.”

Molly snorted, but Ron kept talking. “Should have known... Needed an Omega for your collection, Malfoy?”

“Ronald!” scolded Molly. “Not here!” She grabbed him and Apparated away, leaving a confused Draco and an angry Hermione in their wake.

They walked the three blocks to The Leaky Cauldron and met up with Lucius.

“I thought we’d eat in the Alley today,” the older man suggested.

“Actually, Father, I think Muggle London would be a safer bet today. Someplace exclusive where we won’t be bothered?”

Lucius looked at his son and then at Hermione, narrowing his eyes at the flustered look they both wore. “I know just the place.”

They Apparated to Malfoy Manor. Hermione took one look at her surroundings and collapsed onto the floor, sobbing to near hyperventilation. Draco Summoned a Calming Draught and helped her up to her rooms, starting a hot bath and letting her know that he’d inform their superior they wouldn’t be returning that afternoon due to a family emergency. Once he’d ensured her safety and comfort, he returned to his father, who had moved into the Master Study.

Lucius forewent lunch and instead had two tumblers of scotch on the rocks waiting on a low table before the fireplace. “Tell me everything,” he said when Draco sat down.

Draco thought for a moment, bringing the glass to his mouth and savouring the liquor while arranging his thoughts. “We ran into Weaslebee and his mum outside the Ministry. He assaulted her, you know this, but since he was arrested... His follow-up hearing must have been today. They must have removed the binding magic keeping them apart.”

“They weren’t respectful?”

“Come, Father. You know them better than that. But the things they said...” Draco trailed off and began thinking.

“Now, Dragon, you need to speak your thoughts. Together we can work through this and make things right for her.”

“Before the assault, she’d come over once before complaining of something that oaf had done. But even –“

“Yes?”

“Father,” Draco whispered in horror. “They potioned her. Fuck.”

Lucius saw red. “When?”

Draco reeled back at the venom in his father’s voice. Sure he’d noticed that Hermione and Lucius had grown closer over the months she’d lived with them, but Draco thought his father was still mourning the loss of his wife. Narcissa had been murdered by her sister Bellatrix during the Battle of Hogwarts after Harry had come back to life. Lucius had seen it happen, as he’d been standing next to her. The older man had apparently gotten over his loss...

“Draco, when?”

“Not today. Her birthday.” Draco took a deep breath, swallowed hard, and met his sire’s eyes. “She’s an Omega.”

The colour drained from Lucius’s face. “You cannot know that,” he whispered.

“I can presume.”

“How?”

Taking another sip of his drink, he extrapolated. “She and Weasley had a normal relationship until her twentieth birthday. She’d told me that morning that her magic was a bit off, and then that afternoon, she’d said that git and his mum were acting strange around her. Then the next morning when I got to work, she appeared hung-over even though I know for a fact she does not drink on work nights. They must have dosed her after everyone left, then Stunned and Obliviated her so that she doesn’t remember.”

“So, when he assaulted her...”

“The memory of that night showed him speaking the spell before she escaped.”

Lucius was on his feet before Draco finished speaking. He crossed the room and grabbed his wand from where it rested near his desk. When he turned to exit the room, he found his path impeded by his son. “Move.”

“No. She’s fine, and I’m only speculating.” When Lucius tried to move around him, Draco countered and spoke again. “She’s safe here, Father! Honestly, what’s gotten into you?”

Face clearing, Lucius looked into his son’s eyes and said, “I don’t know.”

The two men crossed back to the hearth, retaking their chairs and sipping their drinks, a house-elf appearing for refills and leaving the bottle on the table between them.

A thought hit Draco.

“You never claimed Mum, did you?”

“No,” he breathed. “She was a Beta, but we weren’t a love match; our families arranged our marriage before she was out of nappies. By the time we developed any true affection for each other, it was too late in our marriage to complete the ritual. Just another in the litany of ways I let her down.”

“She loved you. You know that as well as I do. Your decisions weren’t always the best, but she followed you in every single one.”

Lucius smiled proudly. “When did you get so mature?”

“When I married and claimed Astoria. It was like a Lumos.”

The men laughed and then sat silently for a few minutes, simmering in their own thoughts.

“We can’t tell her,” Lucius said finally. “It’s but conjecture on our part that she was potioned, no matter what the Weasley matriarch and her son let slip in the street today. We can’t confirm she’s truly an Omega until... when?”

“The nineteenth of September.”

“Right. So that gives us a little more than two months to figure things out and put a plan in place.”

“Do you really think they’ll come after her again?” Draco asked.

“Absolutely.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Thanks to my beta, Red, (aka GaeilgeRua) for her wonderful work on my crap writing! Remaining mistakes are mine.

PLEASE NOTE THE TAGS!!!! This chapter includes kidnapping and minor character death. HEED THE WARNINGS!!!!

September lurked just around the corner, and the Malfoy men were on high alert. They'd pooled their resources and had Hermione on twenty-four-hour guard, though she didn't know it. While she was at the Manor, she was free to roam the grounds however she saw fit; no one was getting into the estate without their express permission. At work, she was surrounded by Ministry employees. The in-between was where the problem lied.

It was easy enough for Draco to escort her to and from, as they worked together and kept the same schedule. Lunch hour was different, as they only lunched together once a week. For those other four days, Draco and Lucius enlisted Astoria, Harry, and a few other trusted individuals with the care and keeping of Hermione Granger. No one knew the real reason for the paranoia, only that Ron was freed from his magical restraints and he and his mother had verbally accosted her since his release. That was reason enough for most people; everyone loved Hermione.

Lucius lamented the fact that she was so well-loved; he'd reluctantly accepted the fact that he'd developed feelings for the witch. He was so much older than her, as well as the father of one of her best mates, and he felt resigned to his role. The fact that she saw past who he had been and accepted him as a part of her life astounded him on a regular basis. But more than that?

He met her for lunch as often as he could, but business was calling him away to the United States for a fortnight. The timing couldn't have been worse, as it was the two weeks leading up to her twenty-first birthday. They still weren't sure she realised the danger she was in, but they were hesitant to enlighten her. However, the day before he left, Lucius came to a realisation that he blurted out over lunch, completely uncharacteristic of his usual staid approach.

"You know," he whispered.

"Know what?" she asked him.

He leaned closer so as to not alert all and sundry. "You know you're an Omega."

It wasn't a question.

"Not definitively. I've suspected as much since R... Since he attacked me last year, but there's no way to be sure."

"There's a potion," he hedged.

"A highly illegal potion, you mean," chastised Hermione. "I don't want you to get into trouble for something we will know legally in fifteen days. I've waited this long, what's two more weeks?"

"Those two weeks could be dangerous for you."

She sighed. He was right, but she didn't want to tell him that and inflate his ego. She also didn't want to tell him about the threatening owls she'd received since Ron was released from his sentence. It was scary. She was scared.

"I don't have to go to the States."

"Yes, you do. Draco and Harry have been protecting me for months. You know they have, and I'm pretty sure you put them up to it."

He had the good grace to look guilty. "I feel very protective of you."

"Residual Alpha traits." She chuckled. "Your wife was lucky to have you, Lucius."

"What do you mean?"

She smiled at him. "Despite what I thought of you in my youth, you really are a good man."

"Hermione," he said, taking her hand. "I appreciate your sentiments, but Narcissa and I weren't a match." At her confused look, he continued. "We were an arranged marriage, and by the time we'd come to care enough for each other for me to claim her, it was too late for the ritual to work."

She gaped at him. "You're an unmated Alpha?"

His look turned predatory. "And you, my dear, are an unclaimed virgin Omega, if the rumours are to be believed."

She swallowed.

"Now do you understand why it's so dangerous for you? The only way you'll be safe is for you to stay in the Manor until you come into your magical inheritance. You can use the library to research a way to protect yourself until you find a... suitable partner."

Hermione argued with Lucius for the better part of their lunch hour. He wanted her to stay home and be safe while he was away, and she wanted to go to work because where could be safer than the Ministry of Magic with all its Aurors wandering about? He reminded her of Voldemort, as well as the fact that while her office may be safe, there were plenty of areas

that weren't, areas that were open to the public. In the end, she relented under the condition that she be allowed to work from home and not just wallow in the library.

"As if you ever wallow in any library," Lucius teased.

The next morning, Lucius left for his business trip, and Draco left for the Ministry. Hermione spent the day with Astoria, who revealed to her that she suspected she and Draco were expecting their first child.

"Please don't say anything. I've only just skipped my menses a few days ago. If I tell Draco, he'll get excited and start buying baby Quidditch supplies and stuff when I might just be late and not actually pregnant."

"Are you having any symptoms?" Hermione asked, taking the other woman's hands in her own.

"Nothing that can't also be attributed to pre-menstrual syndrome."

Hermione sighed, but then her face lit up. "I know the charm!"

"What?"

"I know the pregnancy detection charm! Ginny Potter showed it to me!"

"Really? Oh, Hermione, do you? Could you?" Astoria radiated excitement.

Hermione grasped her wand and twisted it above Astoria's abdomen. "Graviditatis Revelare." A jet of white shot from her wand and settled around the other woman's midsection, pulsing slightly before turning a rather pale purple. Hermione wasn't sure what that meant, Ginny's spell had turned bright blue, but Astoria immediately burst into tears and launched herself at Hermione.

"Thank you!" the younger witch cried.

"I suppose this means you're pregnant?"

"Yes! Yes! Oh, I can't wait to tell Draco!"

The two witches sat together over lunch discussing babies, picking at food, and trying to figure out the best way to break the news to the soon-to-be daddy. By the time Draco got home from the Ministry, Astoria was in their suite waiting to make the big reveal, and Hermione was sat in the library realising she'd not done a thing all day.

Draco was on cloud nine the next time she saw him, and Hermione spent the subsequent days with a smile on her face. His enthusiasm and excitement were catching. For the rest of the week, she holed up in her rooms with all the books the Malfoy library had to offer on Protective Magic. She also made sure to take the time to complete work Draco had brought home for her. The first week Lucius was gone went by quickly, but the next week seemed to drag.

Four days before her birthday, Hermione realised that each book she'd read on her magic had all referenced a tome she knew the Ministry had in its stacks. She closed her most recent read and slipped on a pair of shoes. The floors of the Manor got cold even in the warmest months, and she needed to find Astoria. She found the younger witch crying in her rooms.

"What's wrong?" Hermione asked, crossing the room to comfort her.

"Nothing. Pregnancy hormones." Astoria daintily blew her nose. "Actually, that's a lie. I'm sad."

"Why?"

"Draco had to go out of town for a few days. The Ministry needed him to oversee some legal matter in Italy, but don't worry. He'll be back before your birthday."

"Well, damn. I need a book!" Hermione pouted.

"You mean that amongst those myriad texts in the library, there is a book they DON'T own?"

The women laughed, and Hermione explained her situation. After a few minutes, Astoria had a plan.

"I'll go in with you. We'll Floo directly into the Ministry, hop down to wherever it is they are holding that mysterious book the Malfoy's don't own, and then Floo directly back. In and out. We can be home by lunch."

"I'll grab my bag! Meet you at the Floo in five minutes?"

"Perfect!"

Hermione practically ran to her rooms, grabbed her wand and beaded bag, slipped on a pair of flats, and ran back to the main Floo. Astoria was already there, waiting patiently. The witches joined hands and called out for the Ministry Public Floo, swirling away with a flash of green flames.

The Atrium was relatively silent for a Friday morning. The Daily Prophet hawkers were already gone for the day, having already sold out their stack of newspapers. Snack carts were still being set up, as it was a bit too early in the day for lunch time. Astoria and Hermione marched with a purpose toward the lifts, hardly sparing a glance for anyone else in the halls. They wanted to get in and get home before anyone realised they were there. It helped that their lift was empty, and that Hermione knew precisely where to find the book she needed. Not five minutes after Flooing in, they were headed back to through the Atrium.

Astoria stopped suddenly just before they reached the Floos. She looked at her shoes and began to wander off. Hermione opened her mouth to call out but was instead shoved roughly into the flames, dropping her book in the process. She emerged in a tatty living room that smelled strongly of cabbage. Before she could get her bearings, her world went black.

Astoria looked around the Atrium, unsure of where Hermione went and wondering why her head felt wonky. She looked and noticed a book laying on the ground near the bank of fireplaces and immediately went into a panic.

“Help!” she screamed. “Someone! Help!”

An Auror nearby came running over. “Ma’am? What’s wrong?”

“Hermione! My friend! She was taken, I know it. I... I don’t know... I don’t know what happened!” She began to hyperventilate, heaving great sobs and falling to the floor.

“Ma’am. Ma’am just breathe,” the Auror said calmly. “We’ll figure this out. Now, what did you say her name was?”

“Hermione Granger.”

That was all it took for him to fly into action, yelling across the Ministry for someone to get Auror Potter as quickly as possible. He asked Astoria for her name, and then took details of everything that she remembered. When Harry showed up with a half dozen more Aurors, she repeated the tale, this time including the explanation as to why Hermione had been under watch by Harry, and why Ron might want the witch.

Harry barked orders. “Ronald Weasley is our prime suspect, and yes, I realise no one saw him here,” he added when he got some confused looks. “He seems to be under the misguided assumption that Hermione is an Omega witch and he has assaulted her both verbally and physically in the past. We need to work fast to find her; she turns twenty-one in four days and will come into her full magical inheritance. Also, find Molly Weasley, as we believe the two are working together to steal Hermione’s magic for their own gain.”

“Auror Potter,” came the booming voice of Kingsley Shacklebolt. “If you knew Hermione was in such danger, why didn’t you alert the proper authorities?”

“I’m sorry, Minister. I didn’t realise until just now that he suspected her of being an Omega. It never came out.”

“Then why did Mrs. Malfoy just say you were part of a team keeping an eye on Hermione?”

“Draco and Lucius seemed to feel that she was in danger, but I simply thought they were being overprotective of her after the verbal threats in July.” He paused. “I didn’t know,” he added almost silently. “I should have protected her.”

“Harry,” Astoria soothed. “We need to get Draco home. He’s in Italy.”

An hour later, operation headquarters were set up in the Smoking Room of Malfoy Manor. Astoria sat on a wingback chair near the fireplace, holding a cup of tea and watching the flames for Draco’s arrival. Harry and Kingsley were sending and receiving owls and Patronus

messages, waiting for news on the apprehension of Molly Weasley. The order had been given to monitor the remaining Weasley family members to see if they had any contact with their youngest brother or their mother. A message from Charlie Weasley had just come in when the Floo roared to life.

“Tori,” Draco said, immediately falling into the arms of his wife.

“Draco. I’m so sorry. This is entirely my fault. I should have stopped her. We should have waited or owled the Ministry for the book. This never would have happened if I hadn’t said we should go. I’m so sorry.” She kept apologising, crying into her husband’s shoulder as he reassured her that it would be fine, they would find Hermione, and none of this was her fault.

Harry motioned for Draco. “A word please, Malfoy?”

“Excuse me, love. I’ll be right back.” Draco stood and crossed the room to where Harry set up his command center.

“She’s an Omega?”

“Well, Potter, at least you’re not beating around the bush.”

“Can it, Malfoy. Every moment we’re sarcastic is another moment closer to not finding her in time.”

“We don’t know for certain—“

“But you’re pretty damn sure.”

“Yes. Father wanted to procure the ingredients to brew the potion, but Hermione stopped him. She said why risk...” He trailed off.

“Why risk what?” Harry asked.

“Delly!” Draco screamed. When the elf appeared, he said, “You need to find Father at once. Bring him home immediately!”

“Yes, Master Draco,” the elf responded, bowing low to the floor and popping away.

Draco turned to Harry. “This is not going to be pretty.”

A moment later, the elf returned with a highly agitated Lucius Malfoy.

“This had better be really damn important, Draco,” he scolded.

Draco met his father’s eyes but didn’t need to speak a word. His expression said it all.

“Delly,” the elder Malfoy began, “can you find her?”

The elf closed her eyes, concentrated for a moment, and then hung her head. “I be punishing myself, Master Lucius.”

“No,” the Malfoy men chorused.

Lucius spoke. “No, Delly. Just keep trying to find her.” Then he turned to his son. “What happened?”

Draco told him everything he knew, and Harry filled him in on the rest.

“Insufferable woman,” Lucius spat without any malice. To Astoria, he said, “This is not your fault. He would have found a way, and we could only keep her here for so long. I think we all knew she would go spare eventually and make an escape. I only hoped I was wrong in that presumption.”

Kingsley took control of the room. “Molly Weasley was apprehended in Knockturn Alley, attempting to purchase Draught of the Living Death. She’s being held at the Ministry, but I can have her brought here at a moment’s notice; she needs to be questioned. The remaining Weasley family members are all clean. None have been in contact with their brother since he was arrested for attacking Hermione last year, and all are willing to join the hunt for her.”

“Bring that bitch.” Lucius’ voice was cold, reminiscent of his Death Eater days, and most of the people in the room either stepped away from him or swallowed hard and gripped their wands. “Felix!”

A wrinkled elf with grey hair coming out of its ears appeared. “Yes, Master?”

“We’re expecting a guest. Prepare the welcome gifts.”

Felix smiled and rubbed his hands together. “Excellent, Master.”

“Mr. Malfoy,” Harry began. “I don’t know what you just asked that elf to do, but—“

“Listen here, Mr. Potter. You are in my home, about to question a woman who may very well know the whereabouts of my witch. I highly suggest you allow me to assist, lest we be led in circles by her insanity.”

The Minister cleared his throat. “We must follow the law.”

Lucius’ eyes went black, his voice dangerous, and his aura glowing red. “The only law applicable here, Minister, falls under Alpha rights. You’ve no jurisdiction in this matter, and you will bow to my need for retribution, especially should something happen to my mate.”

Harry paled. “Holy fuck.”

“Like I said,” Draco commented. “Not pretty.”

“But...” Kingsley stammered. “But you were married for years!”

“He never claimed my mum.”

Kingsley swallowed and looked to Harry. “I really hate to ask this, but I need to know two vital pieces of information right now, Auror Potter.”

Lucius stepped in, answering for him. “Her birthday is Tuesday, and she will only ever be touched by me.”

The Minister muttered a curse. “Bring Molly here.”

~*~

Draco and Harry stood in the hall outside the doors to the Smoking Room, Lucius pacing in front of them. The two younger men shared a look and then did Rock, Paper, Scissors to decide who would speak. Then Harry threw a pair of scissors, he smirked at Draco’s paper and gestured for the blond to console his father.

“They’re going to bring her in and explain everything, but you cannot participate in the interrogation. At least not yet.”

“And why not? My mate is in danger and—“

“I know, Father. But protocols need to be followed! You will get your chance, but the Aurors need to see what they can get from her first. If you go in there half-cocked, you may trigger a spell. We don’t know if she’s taken an Unbreakable Vow or anything, and we need at least some answers before she dies.”

“She dies by MY wand!”

Draco smirked. “Her and her son.”

“I promise you that,” Harry added.

With the details settled, the three re-entered the Smoking Room just in time to see Molly Weasley exit the Floo with two Aurors.

“I know my rights,” Molly spat. “You can’t question me without my solicitor here!” She looked proud of herself, staring down her nose at the assembled group before her. “And he was meant to meet me at the Ministry, not here. So, you’ll just have to wait to get any answers from me!”

Kingsley walked up to her. “Under normal circumstances, you’d be correct, Mrs. Weasley. However, these aren’t normal circumstances, and therefore, you don’t get the benefit of a solicitor.”

“That’s illegal!” she screamed. “I know my rights!”

Lucius spoke from near the door, partially hidden behind Harry and Draco. “You have no rights here, woman. You lost all your rights the moment you aided in the kidnapping of an Omega.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Auror Briggs,” a black-haired wizard said, flourishing his wand, “beginning the transcription of the interrogation of Molly Weasley. Seventeen Aurors in attendance, two bystanders, and the professed magical mate of the victim also present for questioning. Interrogation presided over by Minister for Magic Kingsley Shacklebolt.”

“Mrs. Weasley,” Kingsley began, “we know you participated in the verbal assault of Miss Hermione Granger in July upon the magical reinstatement of your youngest son, Ronald Bilius Weasley. What are the details of that encounter?”

“I refuse to answer any questions without the presence of my solicitor.”

The Minister rolled his eyes. “Do you have any information on a plot to kidnap Hermione Jean Granger?”

“I refuse to answer any questions without the presence of my solicitor.”

“Molly, I don’t think you understand how much trouble you’re in right now. You were apprehended attempting to purchase a very dangerous potion. We know you verbally accosted Miss Granger a few months ago, and we have witnesses who will testify that you purchased the *Odonata Lepidoptera Magicae* a year ago. You’re going to Azkaban, but it’s up to you to determine for how long.”

The witch didn’t budge.

“Mrs. Weasley,” Lucius said while walking toward her. “You may think you know your rights, but you don’t. In fact,” he sneered, “you have precisely zero rights in this matter. You’ve come between an Alpha and his mate, and therefore—”

“She’s not your mate,” Molly spat. “She belongs to my Ronald. You’ll never find her on your own, and by the time you do see her again, she will be nothing more than a Squib.”

“Felix.”

The elf popped into the room. “Yes, Master?”

“Take our guest to the waiting room. Make sure she’s... comfortable.”

Felix leered. “With pleasure, Master.”

Lucius turned to Kingsley. “Do everything in your power to find her. I want every property ever associated with the Weasley family searched, every person Ronald Weasley has ever been in contact with questioned, and every informant you have in your pockets brought in. If she isn’t found before that bastard does that ritual, I will hold you personally responsible, and you will face the same retribution as that thief and his worthless mother. Understood?”

“Clearly.” Kingsley looked around the room. “Why are you all still standing here? You heard him as well as I did!”

Aurors were in and out of the Manor all night and into the morning, seeming no closer to finding Hermione than they were before they captured Molly. Lucius refused to sleep. He paced the room listening to every conversation that happened and offering his help and advice when he could. When asked why he wasn't joining those actually out hunting for her, he said that he needed to stay close for when Molly Weasley finally cracked.

No one asked what he meant. No one wanted to know.

It took just under thirty-six hours before she did break, and Felix immediately appeared next to Lucius. "She is being ready, Master."

Lucius grinned maliciously and strode from the room, his son and Potter hot on his heels. They walked through the house, down into the lower levels where Harry had been kept while on the run. Passing through that space, Lucius led them to a hidden door in the back corner. Upon opening it, sobbing could be heard.

"Stop, please!" pleaded Molly. "Please. I can't!"

"What can't you do?" Lucius asked, stepping into her field of vision.

She was bound to an oversized wooden chair, restraints digging into her wrists and ankles, drawing blood. Aside from that, she didn't seem to have suffered any physical harm, but elf magic differed greatly from their human counterparts. Runes scored into the walls also played a part in the mental instability of their captive, but as soon as Lucius stepped into the room, the runes glowed brightly for a moment before fizzling out, their magic not needed in the presence of the caster.

"Please," Molly begged. "Please keep that elf from me! I can't take this! Please!"

"Then you need to answer my questions. What does your son plan to do with my mate?"

Molly struggled against her restraints and the magic they contained. "He's going to perform the Accipere Virtutem ritual. My boy is going to be the most powerful wizard ever! You'll see! The Weasley name will be revered!" Her words were manic.

"And how does this ritual work?" he asked, staring down at her.

"He's cleansing the space as we speak, waiting for sunrise on Tuesday to begin. He'll..." She struggled, obviously fighting some sort of magical restriction placed on her to keep her from being honest.

"Relax, Mrs. Weasley. Can't have you dying before we get all of our information."

"He needs to spill her blood, making the first cut as the sun first breaks the horizon. Then there's a spell to recite repeatedly until the ritual is finished. She will bleed until the sun rises, tied to the ritual circle, and he will take her virginity just as the sun fully enters the sky. If she survives, she'll be a squib."

He maintained a cool façade. "Does he mean for her to survive?"

“At least until he takes her. After that, he doesn’t care, though he knows his children will be just a bit stronger with her for their mum.”

“Where is he keeping her?”

“I... I ...I can’t....”

“Where!” he demanded.

She began to choke.

“Felix! Break this spell! We need to know!”

But it was too late.

“FUCK!” he bellowed, punching the stone wall on his way out.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Thanks to my beta! I don't feel like looking up how to spell her pen name, so see previous chapter. hahaha (Love ya Red!)

I see your comments and your kudos! Thank you for each and every one of them! It's amazing to me how many people take the time to click the button and/or leave me a few words. Even the ones that are only hearts bring me joy. Thanks a ton!

Here's Chapter 4. One more to go after this one. Hope you enjoy it!

Astoria stood as Lucius came back into the Smoking Room. “Lucius! Your hand!”

“Kingsley, find out everything you can on the Accipere Virtutem ritual. We need to know everything required for its execution. Ley Lines. Potion ingredients. Everything!”

Kingsley nodded and immediately put three Aurors on it.

“I’ll search the Ministry Archives, Father.” Draco crossed the space, heading toward the Floo, and paused by his father’s side. “We will find her,” he promised, and then was gone in a flash of green flames.

There was a flurry of activity as people came in and out with books and resources on this ritual, yet hours passed without them coming any closer to finding Hermione. Everything needed to clean the ritual space were everyday items found in both the Muggle and Magical world, there was no potion to be injected, and a special blade was not required for the bloodletting. They knew what was going to happen, but the ritual ended up being a dead end.

Monday dawned bright and clear, the sun beating down and warming the grounds. It was a direct contrast to the morose mood held within the walls. At precisely 8 A.M., everyone involved in the manhunt reconvened in the Smoking Room to go over every scrap of information they had on the case. It took two hours to get through it all, but they went over every interview, every lead, and every property search they conducted. At the end of it all, there was silence for a full minute...

Until Harry spoke, “What about his Aunt Muriel?”

Everyone looked at him.

“Who?” Draco asked.

“Shite,” Kingsley muttered. “How did we miss it?”

“Fidelus,” Harry said. “We put her place under Fidelus when I was transferred from Privet Drive back before I turned seventeen. I actually forgot it existed ... ‘til now.”

“Until Molly died,” amended the Minister. “They must have renewed the magic on it.”

Harry looked optimistic. “Which means Ron probably doesn’t know his mum is dead.”

Lucius looked up. “Which means we can get to her.”

The Minister had to use a Sonorus to calm the masses around him. “It won’t do to go off halfcocked. We need a plan. I know time is of the essence, but we have the element of surprise in our favour. He doesn’t know his vulnerable. He doesn’t know we know where he is.”

“Delly,” Draco called.

“Yes, Master Draco?”

“Prepare lunch for everyone. A bit of everything, but nothing too heavy, and for Merlin’s sake, NOTHING that will make us lethargic.”

The elf popped away, and Lucius looked at his son. The two wizards shared a look, feeling deep down that they were going to find her in time.

Harry walked to Lucius. “It’s been long enough, and we need you in top form. *Please* let me heal your hand?”

As Harry cleaned the blood from Lucius’ hand, a house-elf entered the room and announced lunch. Once the bones in his hand were reset, Lucius thanked Harry. They made their way to the Formal Dining Room for lunch.

The elves outdid themselves, presenting a myriad of foods from finger sandwiches to roast chicken and bangers and mash. Conversation flowed, and plans were laid as people ate. Kingsley thankfully remembered the location of Molly’s Great Aunt Muriel’s house, so they were able to pull maps and make tactical arrangements. Kingsley and Harry would enter through the front, Lucius and Draco through the back. They would be backed up by sixteen other Aurors who’d been assigned to this mission, surrounding the property, placing Anti-Apparition Wards and Magical Dampening Spells. Ron had a knife for the ritual, but being a Pure-blooded wizard, he would most certainly resort to magic and forget about what he considered Muggle tactics.

“What about the other Weasleys?” Harry asked.

“Absolutely not,” Lucius spat.

“Lucius is right,” Kingsley added. “While they say they’re on our side, our resident Alpha would see them as a threat when we get close to Hermione, simply by virtue of their blood relation. Better to keep them safe and out of this.”

~*~

A small reconnaissance team was sent ahead to make sure that was where Ron was holding Hermione. They returned to the Manor not five minutes later, leaving a pair of Aurors behind to make sure Ron stayed put.

“He’s there. Has her tied up in the basement. We could see the ritual circle set up down there.”

“There are some minor wards set up,” continued another Auror. “It’s nothing we can’t dismantle easily, but he may know we’re coming then.”

“So,” Kingsley said, “we wait until everyone is in place before we bring them down.” He turned to the group. “We’re moving in five minutes. Get yourselves together. Harry and I will go ahead in four and set Sound Dampening Wards. This will negate any noise from the rest of you lot Apparating in. Once we’re all there, Anti-Apparition wards go up, as do the Magical Dampening Wards, we get in place, and I’ll give the signal. Remember,” he added, “that none of you are to touch Miss Granger. That is Mr. Malfoy’s job. Once he has her, he will send up sparks and Portkey back here. Weasley is to be taken alive, but using any non-lethal force necessary.”

“No.”

“Excuse me?”

“No,” Lucius repeated. “He is to be unharmed. Stun him. Do not hurt him. He. Is. Mine.”

Everyone looked toward the Minister who swallowed and nodded. “You heard him. Three minutes. Everyone knows where we’re going?”

“Yes, Minister,” they chorused.

“And everyone knows their role?”

“Yes, Minister.”

“Prepare yourselves.”

~*~

The rescue of Hermione Granger went off without a hitch. When they breached the property, Ron immediately attempted to curse them but failed due to the wards placed by the Aurors. He was quickly subdued and restrained while Lucius ran to the basement to collect his witch.

Ron was taken to the Ministry holding cells while Lucius immediately Apparated Hermione to St. Mungo's.

"Mr. Malfoy," the Mediwitch pleaded. "We need to examine her, and we can't do that with you attached to her hip."

"I'm not leaving her."

"I'm sorry, but you're not family. You have to –"

He snarled, "She is my mate, witch! I am NOT leaving her."

"That's fine," she soothed. "You can stay, but can you at least back away a few feet so we can move around her?"

Another Mediwitch added, "I promise we won't hurt her, and we'll verbalize every spell, so you know what we're casting."

He nodded and backed up to the wall, his eyes never leaving Hermione's prone and unconscious form. He watched as the witches checked for external wounds, internal injuries, broken bones, and sexual contact. Then they drew some blood and ran toxicology spells. When everything was finished, they pulled the sheets up over her chest and tucked her in, leaving her face and shoulders uncovered.

"Well, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that aside from a slight concussion and the bruising around her wrists from the ropes, she's physically fine. A bit of malnutrition and dehydration, but those are both easily fixed. The bad news is that he had her subdued via potions and the ingredients seem to have negatively interacted."

"When will she wake up?"

"We aren't certain. Could be five minutes, could be never."

"Never," he huffed, "is unacceptable. Find a cure."

She was unconscious all through Monday. Harry and Draco took turns with Lucius sitting at her bedside, though Lucius rarely left. He'd gone back to the Manor Monday evening to shower and change, but returned within a half-hour, transfiguring the lone chair in the room to something a bit more comfortable for sleeping. The nurses brought a pillow and some blankets for him and his elves brought him meals and water to drink. He barely ate and didn't sleep. Tuesday morning, an owl arrived from his business contact in the United States. The letter stated they'd understood there was an emergency he needed to attend to, but that they'd procured an emergency Portkey and were currently sat at the Ministry awaiting his signatures to close their deal. He waited long enough for Draco to show up and then left, promising to be back as soon as possible.

As fate would have it, Hermione woke up while Lucius was gone.

Draco jumped up. "Get the Healer!" he called, and Harry ran out into the hall.

“St. Mungo’s again?” she said. “Where’s Ron?”

“Ministry holding cells. Don’t worry about him. You’re safe now.”

“Where’s your father?”

He looked askance. “Why?”

“I...” She looked confused. “I don’t know. I just feel like I need him here.”

“Merlin’s beard, he was right...” Draco whispered.

Harry came back in with a Healer, who immediately began running diagnostic spells and testing her blood. She pronounced Hermione in perfect health but wanted to keep her for another twenty-four hours for observation.

Hermione agreed, but added, “Just so long as I’m home by Tuesday.”

Draco, Harry, and the Healer shared a look. “Um, Miss Granger,” the Healer began. “Today is Tuesday.”

She looked between them, waiting for the laughter to begin. “You’re joking, right?”

No one spoke.

“You have to be kidding! Ron just took me yesterday!”

“Miss Granger, you were potioned. The ingredients didn’t react well in your system. You were unconscious when Mr. Malfoy and the Aurors rescued you.”

A tear leaked from her left eye, and she wiped it away angrily. “That... That... Son of a bitch! Where’s Molly? Molly Weasley. Where is she? She was helping him!”

Lucius stood in the doorway. “She’s dead.”

“Lucius!” Hermione cried, sitting up in the hospital bed.

He crossed the room and pulled her into his arms, sitting on the edge of her bed. “I cannot express how happy I am you’re awake,” he whispered into her hair. “Don’t fret. That boy will pay for his crimes.”

She nodded into his shoulder, holding him close as she cried. “Get me out of here. I don’t want to be here anymore, Lucius. Take me home.”

Being Lucius Malfoy had its advantages, or rather having Lucius Malfoy’s money was advantageous. He promised to have an elf Apparate her back should her condition relapse. Within ten minutes, Lucius had her tucked into a chaise lounge in the Malfoy Manor Library with a hot cup of tea and a blanket over her lap. He pulled a chair up and sat beside her, asking her what she remembered.

“I was at the Ministry with... OH! Astoria! Where is she? Is she alright?”

He laughed softly. “She’s fine, Love. Just a mild Confundus Charm. She blames herself, and I know she’ll be excited to speak with you *later*.”

“I never should have left. He would never have gotten me here. But I wanted that book, and with everyone elsewhere doing other things, I didn’t know who to owl.”

“It’s fine. Not one of us expected you to stay home as long as you did, and you’re back safe with me now.”

“He shoved me through the Floo, and I hit my head on Muriel’s hearth. I don’t think I’ve seen such a small fireplace in a magical home. Molly took my wand and Stunned me. When I came to, they had me tied in the cellar. It was already nighttime, and I was thirsty and hungry, and my head was throbbing. I should have refused the drink, but Ron was offering a Headache Potion. It was the right colour, smelled right, and so I drank it. Then I took the glass of water from him; only I don’t think it was water. The next thing I knew, I was in Hospital.”

Lucius smiled softly. “Definitely not water.”

She scooted over and tried to get closer to him. “I don’t understand something, though.”

“What is that?”

Hermione looked at him. “Why do I feel so drawn to you? Don’t get me wrong,” she hurried on. “I have to admit that I’ve fancied you for a while, but this is different. I feel like I need to be with you, be close to you...”

Astoria walked in with Draco at that moment. “Isn’t it obvious? You sure you’re the Brightest Witch of Our Age?” she teased.

Draco finished for her. “Father is your mate.”

“My...”

“Yes, Love.”

“When you were captured,” Draco said, “Father went spare. I called him home immediately because I knew you were close and he was protective of you, but when he first said the word, it all fell into place. For all of us actually. Makes me wonder why not one of us saw it before.”

“Hermione,” Astoria whispered, coming close and hugging the older witch. “I am so sorry,” she cried.

“It wasn’t your fault. It’s ok. I’m ok.” Hermione reassured the younger woman, holding her close while they both cried. “Ugh! Why am I crying so much?”

Lucius laughed. “It’s your magic.”

Astoria agreed. "Yeah, it's like when you hit puberty, and your hormones go all over the place? The same things happen when you come into your full magic. It'll last for you until you bond with someone."

"But—"

Lucius cut her off. "This is a conversation for Hermione and I to have." He turned to his son. "Leave."

Draco laughed. "Yes, Father." Then he turned to Hermione. "Glad to have you home, Granger."

"Thanks, Ferret."

"Hey!" Draco laughed while Astoria dragged him from the room.

Hermione smiled as Lucius stood and warded the room. He closed the door, blocked the Floo, and cast Privacy Charms around them. When he came back, she slid over a bit more on the chaise to allow room for him to sit.

He wrapped her in his arms and spoke into her hair. "What do I need to do to make you mine? I'd take you now if I didn't already know you're a virgin, but I need to know what you're waiting for."

"Marriage," she said. "I know it's old fashioned, but—"

"Then marry me," he said plainly. "If you have a date in mind, we can plan something extravagant, or if not, we could marry today. All I would need to do is call the Minister. I'm certain he'd accommodate."

She chuckled and turned toward him, shaking her head. "Today. Draco and Astoria can witness." Then she laughed, loud and long. "Is it crazy?"

"What?"

"That we never dated, and yet there's nothing in my life I feel more sure of than spending the rest of my life with you? That you haven't even given me a ring?" She looked down at her hands, entwined with his in her lap. "That you've never kissed me?"

He released her hands and moved to turn her. Looking down into her face, he watched as she licked her lips, her pink tongue shooting out of her mouth for only a second before sucking her bottom lip back in. They leaned closer, but rather than fully closing the distance, he leaned his forehead against hers.

"Let me get Kingsley. I fear that if I kiss you now, neither of us will make it to the wedding." He disentangled himself and moved to a desk nearby. Pulling a piece of parchment and a quill from a drawer, he penned a missive and sent it off with an owl.

"I thought you wanted to rush this?" Hermione asked.

“I do, but you need to eat.”

~*~

Delly provided a meal of soup and sandwiches, not wanting anything too heavy to upset Hermione's stomach. The elf stood by and watched as Hermione ate the soup but barely touched the sandwich. Her large ears hung low, convinced her food wasn't good enough. It took Lucius getting down on the elf's level to calm the creature.

By the time the dishes were cleared, Kingsley had arrived and was waiting in the Library for them with Draco and Astoria. When they entered, Astoria pulled Hermione from the room saying that the men needed to speak, and she needed to change. Taking one look at Hermione's curvy frame, Astoria pointed her wand and Transfigured the other witch's clothes into an off the shoulder, sweetheart neckline, pure white ball gown.

“This is beautiful, but I'm not wearing heels,” Hermione said.

“So? Go barefoot. Who's going to know?”

The ceremony was short and included an exchange of Muggle vows, Magical rights, and a binding of hands. A certificate was signed by all in attendance and sent to the Ministry. Then Kingsley smiled.

“I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may—“

They were kissing before he even finished, earning a laugh from the three other people. Hugs and thanks were exchanged, along with congratulations, and Lucius promised a more public affair in the future before he picked up his new bride and Apparated them to his bedroom.

“When were you born, Wife?”

“19 September 1979.”

“What time?” he growled.

“Um,” she stammered, taking in his predatory look as he set her down and stalked her across the room. “12:42 in the afternoon? I think?”

“*Tempus*. Just gone noon. Suppose I'll have to enjoy you in other ways for a bit, won't I?”

She swallowed and then jolted when the backs of her legs hit the side of the bed. Putting her hands up before her, she drew him in, joining their lips as she hungrily kissed her new husband. He tasted like Earl Grey, and she savoured the flavour. They kissed as he wrapped his arms around her and lowered her to the bed, placing her gently upon the coverlet.

“I'm going to worship every inch of you,” he promised.

“Yes...”

“But first...” He pulled his wand and cancelled the transfiguration on her clothes, returning her to the joggers and t-shirt she’d worn home from Hospital. “As much as I loved the gown, this is easier.”

She nodded, reaching out and trying to pull him toward her to no avail.

He placed his wand on the nightstand and lowered his head to her neck, kissing a hot trail from the top of her shoulder where the neck of her shirt was up to her ear lobe. Sucking it into his mouth, he scraped the surface with his teeth, trying to learn what she liked and what she didn’t. When she reacted favourably, he repeated the process on the other side, ending with kissing across her jaw and claiming her mouth again.

She threaded her fingers through his hair, enjoying the feel of the silky tresses pulled free from the leather thong he typically wore. When he returned his attention to her neck, she reciprocated, kissing a path across his shoulder and neck, earning a moan and a series of physical shivers from him.

“Let me please you,” whispered Lucius.

She nodded and lay back, letting him have his way and knowing he would take care of her.

His hands found their way to the bottom of her shirt, and he pulled it up over her head, revealing her breasts to the chill air of his bed chambers. When she shivered, he lowered his mouth and took a pert nipple between his lips, drawing upon the already pebbled flesh and sucking. He groaned when her finger clenched in his hair, pulling at the roots.

“Yes!” he hissed.

Her nerves were on fire, every synapse in her brain firing at once at the way his mouth and hands stroked her body and brought her pleasure like she’d never known. She tensed a bit when he reached the waistband of her joggers, but relaxed when he slowly drew them down her legs, leaving her in nothing but her plain white cotton knickers. Her kneejerk reaction was to draw her legs up and cover herself, but instinct told her she was safe. He was safe. He would take care of her.

He started at the instep of her left foot, kissing it lightly before moving to her ankle, her calf, her knee, and then her thigh. Just before he reached where her underwear covered her, he moved back and repeated the process on her right leg. The closer he got to her core, the more she wiggled and thrashed.

Lucius raised his head, grabbed his wand, and again cast the spell to discover the time. “Nineteen more minutes...” he uttered.

She knew distantly that he was referring to when she’d officially be twenty-one years old, but for the life of her, she couldn’t figure out why it was important. Instead, she focused on his hands which grasped her knickers and pulled them down her legs, baring her completely before him.

“It would appear,” he said, “that I am over-dressed.” Leaning back on his heels, he removed his waistcoat and shirt before moving to his belt and slacks.

“Wait,” Hermione said. She sat up and brought her hands to the fly of his trousers, lowering the zip and pushing the material over his hips. When he fell back onto his behind, she pulled his pants down with his trousers, leaving him as naked as she was. She expected him to fall onto her then and push himself inside of her, but instead, he shoved at her shoulders and settled around her knees.

“Too soon for that, my love.”

At first, she wasn't sure what he meant, but when his tongue traced a path from her anus through her folds, she didn't care. Any thought of hiding from him was gone as his mouth closed over her, licking and sucking at her clit, just barely slipping his tongue into her entrance to taste the moisture gathering there. He was teasing her as he licked, not quite pushing his tongue fully inside of her. Then he brought his fingers up to her clit and began playing with it, pinching, rubbing, and flicking until her body tightened and orgasm overtook her.

“Oh, God! Lucius!” she cried out, her hips bucking up into his mouth.

Just as she began to come down from her high, he inserted his middle finger and wiggled it against the spongy front, causing her orgasm to renew. He stayed on her, eating her like a man starved as she writhed in his arms. When she finally began to calm again, he removed his finger and kissed his way up her stomach, paying special attention to her breasts, before bringing his face to hers.

“I'm going to kiss you now. Is that alright?” Lucius asked.

Instead of answering with words, she wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him down to her. They kissed deeply, Hermione tasting the tart essence of herself on his lips and tongue. She slowed a bit and dropped her head back on the pillow.

“That was amazing, Lucius,” she breathed.

He chuckled, again casting the Tempus spell. “It would appear it's about that time,” he warned. “I'd ask if you were certain about this, but Merlin himself couldn't stop me from claiming you right now.”

She laughed softly as he rolled over her and settled between her thighs. “What are you waiting for?”

His wand vibrated on the nightstand as her body began to glow slightly. “That,” he said simply before lining himself up and entering her fully in one thrust.

She cried out from the pain of his intrusion combined with the pleasure of fully coming into her magic. Her aura shined a bright white as orgasm immediately overtook her again. She shuddered beneath him, seeing sparks fill her vision, and when he began to move, her entire world tilted upon its axis.

He filled her completely, her passage gripping his cock with exquisite torture. Lucius thrust into her gently at first, knowing she would tear if he rutted like instinct wanted to. Instead, he went slow as her body calmed, and her magic settled around them. He whispered praises into her hair, telling her how wonderful and perfect and amazing she was, promising to always be there, to take care of her, to love her eternally.

Hermione brought her hands up to thread into his hair, the initial pain of sex giving way to pleasure and desire for more. "Lucius," she breathed. "Please."

"Please what, my love?"

"Please. I need... I I need..."

"Yes?"

"More!" she cried. "Please more! Faster!"

"Whatever you need, Love. All for you..."

She was close, he could tell by the fluttering that began against his cock. He knew in the back of his mind that mating with an Omega was considered akin to an out of body experience, but he'd never actually known any Alpha who'd met their mate. This was all new and incredible and mind-blowing. Her walls began clenching against him, his cock growing impossibly hard inside of her.

"No..." he breathed awestruck.

"Ngh! Oh!!! Oh God!!!"

They spoke only in choruses of moans and cries as their magic joined together. Hermione's body glowed white as she felt him grow larger inside of her. She opened her eyes and saw him glowing with a red aura above her, the colours mixing and pulsing as they both fell over the edge into orgasmic ecstasy. In a fit of passion, he bit down on her left shoulder just beside where it met with her neck. Her body spasmed, his cock shooting jets of seed into her as they rode their high and their magics settled, and he licked the blood from his mark. They shook and panted, coming back to themselves. He stayed over her for a few moments before collapsing on top of her.

"Lucius," she panted. "I love you, but you're heavy."

He pulled away from her just enough to look into her eyes. "You love me?"

She looked surprised. "I mean, yes," she rushed, "but you don't need—"

"I love you, too, witch." He kissed her lips. "Wife." He kissed her jaw. "Mate..." he whispered as he kissed his mark.

Hermione sighed happily. "But I mean it: You're heavy."

He chuckled and tried to pull away only to discover he couldn't. "Um, I don't know how to say this delicately, but I can't. Best I can offer is to roll us onto our sides?"

"Why?"

He looked embarrassed. "I'm knotted inside of you," he said in a rush.

She stared at him. "Care to run that by me again?"

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Thanks to my beta! She is the bestest... lol

NOW!!!! PAY ATTENTION!!! Are you reading this??? YOU BETTER READ THIS!!!!!!

This chapter contains graphic depictions of violence and torture. GRAPHIC!!!!!!!!!! <--- yes, it deserves all caps and a ton of exclamation points. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO READ THAT BIT, you don't have to. I have tagged the section with

~*~*~*~WARNING~*~*~*~

...or something similar. But when you see the word WARNING, if you aren't into GRAPHIC DEPICTIONS OF VIOLENCE AND TORTURE, skip down until you see the closing tag.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

“Will it always be like this?” Hermione asked.

“In what way?” responded Lucius.

She blushed, turning his head into his bare shoulder, and feeling his cock still hard inside her. “Will you, er, always...”

“Knot?” he provided, and she could hear the smile in his voice.

“Yeah.”

She felt him shake his head. “I don’t know, my love. What we have is so rare, not much is known about it. Hell, even I didn’t know my body was capable of this.”

“I don’t know if I’m ready to start a family.”

“There are spells,” he soothed. “We don’t need to bring children into our dynamic until you’re ready, if at all. There’s no pressure from me.”

“Thank you, Lucius.” She leaned up and kissed him, sighing into his mouth when he allowed her to deepen the kiss. Passion stirred inside her as he moved over her, his knot still swollen.

“We’re stuck together,” he said between kisses, “so we may as well make the best of it.”

Hermione tried to gain some friction by rocking against him, but his cock barely budged. She whinged a bit until he brought a hand between them and toyed with her clit until she came, screaming her release into his mouth. He continued to kiss her as she spasmed around his knot, brushing feather-light pecks to her cheeks, jaw, nose, eyes, and forehead while she calmed, groaning with her when he softened and slipped from her.

“Don’t go,” she pleaded, suddenly filled with fear that he was going to leave her.

“Never.”

He rolled them onto their left sides and pulled her in close to him, spooning her from behind. They lay entwined for a while, both drifting off to sleep until a knock on the window disturbed them. Lucius reached for his wand and let the owl into the room with the evening edition of The Daily Prophet. The picture on the front above the fold was Ron Weasley being led through the Ministry by Harry Potter, the headline screaming: “GOLDEN TRIO IN RUINS!”

His mood soured.

Pulling his arm from underneath his sleeping wife, he rose from the bed and walked to a small table across the room. He unfolded the paper and threw it down, turning instead to the bathroom. Water cascaded from the shower head, washing the sweat from his previous activities down the drain. He was only under the water for a minute before he was joined in the shower.

“I thought you’d left,” she said, wrapping her arms around his middle. “I don’t know what I’d do if you’d gone.”

He held her beneath the spray. “I’m so sorry, my love. I’d forgotten that you would be more insecure during your first heat. I promise not to leave your side again unless you ask it of me.”

She buried her head in his chest. “I hate feeling like this. I’ve never been reliant on anyone, and yet here I am practically panicking when I woke up and you weren’t there.”

“It’s alright. It’s only a few days, and I’ll be with you for each and every one. It’ll be easier on you once I’ve properly claimed you as mine.”

“You mean,” she began, bringing a hand to where he bit her shoulder.

He dropped a soft kiss to the cut. “No. That was merely instinct, a more base and primal reaction to our coupling.” He kissed her mouth briefly. “Let’s get you clean. Then we can have food sent up.

She practically purred as he soaped her body and massaged the knots from her muscles. When he pulled his shampoo from the shelf and began to wash her hair, she thought she’d died and gone to Heaven. All too soon, they were clean and exiting the bathroom together. Hermione moved to a small table near the window while Lucius called for Delly and asked

her to prepare food and drink for them. Looking down at the tabletop, Hermione spied the paper, her eyes catching on the headline. She picked it up and began reading to herself.

Ronald Bilius Weasley, 20, of Ottery St Catchpole was arrested this morning on kidnapping charges with intent to harm. Weasley was apprehended at the residence of Muriel Prewett in Godric's Hollow earlier today. Minister for Magic Kingsley Shacklebolt led the raid that resulted in Weasley's capture and the rescue of Hermione Jean Granger.

Granger, 20 ...

"Hermione, stop," Lucius said, taking the paper from her.

"Why? I should know what the press is saying about all of this."

"And I agree, my heart, but this paper is from yesterday."

"Then why haven't you gotten rid of it?"

He furrowed his brow. "Because it just came before I got in the shower."

"Why would you get the paper a day late?" She was just as confused as him.

"Do you know anyone with a snowy owl?"

Her eyes lit. "Harry!" She took the paper from Lucius, set it back on the table, and pointed her wand at it. "Revelio!"

A note appeared on the picture in Harry's unmistakable penmanship:

Lucius,

If you are what you say you are, you'd better deal with this sooner rather than later. We can't hold him much longer on the charges we have.

Harry

"What does he mean?" she asked.

Lucius turned to her, scooping her up from the chair, and carrying her back to the bed. "He means that I need to claim you officially. Then... Well, we'll deal with 'then' later."

He laid her on her back again, hovering over her, kissing her quickly before moving to grab their wands. "I claim you as mine, my love, my soul, my life. We are one." He kissed her reverently, pulling their towels off, joining his right hand to her left while holding the wands, and settling between her thighs. Reaching between them, he discovered her wet and ready, so he lined up his cock and spoke as he pushed into her slowly.

"Dico vobis quod dici meus, amor meus, anima mea vita mea. Et nos unum sumus."

He made love to her slowly, repeating the phrase over and over again as he withdrew and pushed back inside of her, their wands growing warm between their hands. Unconscious of thought, Hermione began to chant the phrase with him.

“Dico vobis quod dici meus, amor meus, anima mea vita mea. Et nos unum sumus.”

Magic coursed through them, spiralling out from every place they touched. The red and white of their aur's shined brilliantly in the room, almost blinding them with the intensity. Still, he rocked inside of her, her hips coming up to meet his as they chased completion. A magical push made them cease chanting and bring their lips together, the touch of their tongues triggering a mutual orgasm that sent a burst of magic outward from them, destroying almost everything in the room.

“My mate,” Hermione whispered.

“My mate,” agreed Lucius, resting his forehead against hers and kissing her nose.

~*~

They walked into the Ministry of Magic hand in hand, the late afternoon crowds of witches and wizards parting like the Red Sea before them. Silence reigned for a moment, but then whispered questions and speculation followed quickly.

“Is that Hermione Granger?”

“Is that Lucius Malfoy?”

“Is that Hermione Granger holding hands with Lucius Malfoy?”

“I heard it was him who actually found her with Ron Weasley.”

“Well, I heard that Ron was trying to save her from Lucius Malfoy!”

“No way. A man like him would never be with her.”

“Well, I heard that he's an Alpha and she's his Omega mate.”

“Oh, for the love of Merlin, that's not true...”

Hermione and Lucius shared a look as they stepped into a lift heading down to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Every Auror in the department looked up upon their arrival. Harry stood from his desk and met them near the lift.

“Good. You got my message.”

“Thanks to Hermione,” Lucius bit out. Softer, he asked, “What do I need to do?”

“You need to make a public claim on Hermione, assert your position as her bonded mate, and then be prepared to prove it. Once that’s finished, you can make a verbal claim on the right to Ron’s punishment under the Laws of Magical Inheritance. There may be some backlash at first, other Alpha men coming out of the woodwork to test your bond, but I don’t see that being an issue for long. It’s quite obvious you two are perfect for each other, and your auras are shining through your eyes. It’s hard to miss. People are going to see how powerful you are together and not want to contest that bond. They will also allow you whatever retribution you see fit against Ron.”

Lucius smiled. “Thank you, Mr. Potter.”

“Harry.”

He nodded. “Harry. Then you must call me Lucius, especially since my wife would be lost without you.”

Harry’s eyes went round with surprise. “Wife?” He turned to Hermione. “Already?”

She leaned in close to Lucius, saying, “It’s a long story, and I promise to tell you later.”

“Deal.”

“In the meantime,” Lucius interrupted, “We have the matter of one Ronald Weasley to address, and I really don’t feel like waiting any longer.”

Smiling, Harry said loud enough for most of the room to hear, “Lord Malfoy, I understand you wish to claim vengeance against Ronald Weasley for the assault against the magic of your bonded mate?”

Lucius’s eyes twinkled with malice. “Yes, Auror Potter. Your prisoner kidnapped my mate in a misguided effort to steal her magic and claim her for his own.”

“I’ll take you to the Minister to formally file your complaint.” Harry turned to the room. “Ron Weasley is not to be released until this matter has been settled by the Minister.”

A chorus of “Yes, Sir,” and “Understood,” echoed through the room. Harry led Hermione and Lucius back into the lift and took them up to Level One. They exited the lift and walked down the hall, stopping before the desk of Percy Weasley.

“Harry!” Percy greeted. “Good to see you! What brings you up here today?”

“I’m escorting Mr. Malfoy. He’s here to file a formal complaint against your brother.”

Percy looked up at Hermione with shocked realisation. “Fuck me,” he breathed. “So, it’s true? You’re an Omega?”

Lucius answered for her. “Yes, Mr. Weasley, and my *wife* and I are here to make certain no one else has the opportunity to do to her what your youngest sibling attempted to do.”

“Youngest brother,” Percy corrected.

“Excuse me?”

“Ginny’s the youngest,” he clarified. “And while I’m sure Ginny loves Hermione, I’m positive it’s not the same.”

Hermione and Harry chuckled while Lucius rolled his eyes and Percy stood to show them into the Minister’s office. He then closed the door behind them.

“Hermione!” Kingsley shouted. “So good to see you up and about!” He moved to embrace her, but Lucius stepped between them as she huddled into Lucius’ side.

“Minister Shacklebolt, my wife means no disrespect. She’s in the middle of her first heat.”

“Understood. Well, what can I do for you?”

“I wish to claim vengeance upon Ronald Bilius Weasley for his attempt to steal magic from my mate on at least two separate occasions.”

Kingsley furrowed his brow. “Two?”

“Yes, Minister. He kidnapped her from these very halls and held her in a basement while he prepared a ritual circle to utilise when she came into her full inheritance upon her twenty-first birthday. Further, I have reason to believe that the attack upon her last year was an attempt to rape and steal her magic, rendering her a Squib and elevating his own standing within our community. Vengeance was already claimed against his mother, Molly Weasley, as we know her to have been involved in these plots since the beginning, including the illegal potioning of my mate upon her twentieth birthday last September.”

“You make this request,” Kingsley responded officially, “based upon a perceived claim upon the victim, Hermione Granger. To do so is to insinuate that Miss Granger has presented as an Omega. Are you also claiming that you, Lord Malfoy, an Alpha, have found your perfect magical match in the Omega witch, Hermione Granger?”

“I am, Minister. The former Miss Granger and I were married in a private ceremony attended by my son and his bonded wife and presided over by the office of the Minister of Magic.”

“This office recalls those events of last evening, the eighteenth of September in the year 2000.”

“Upon reaching her twenty-first birthday earlier today, the new Lady Malfoy received her full magical inheritance, presented as an Omega, and participated in a bonding and mating ritual with me. Our magic completely integrated, linking us together for all eternity, and our hearts beat as one. Had Ronald Weasley been successful in either attempt to claim the magic of my mate for himself, this world would not have benefitted from the blessings of our perfect union. For these reasons, I petition for dominion over the prisoner, Ronald Weasley, for appropriate punishment for his crimes against magic itself.”

“Your petition is conditionally granted, to be held until such a time that your claim upon Miss Granger, now Lady Malfoy, is successfully challenged, or until twenty-four hours has

passed.”

“Thank you, Minister.”

“Auror Potter, please contact the Daily Prophet and post the Notice of Alpha Claim upon Omega Granger.”

“Right away, Minister.”

Kingsley sighed then smiled. “Now, with that out of the way, how are things? I can tell your magic has settled into your marriage bond nicely. Is it too personal to ask how Hermione’s first heat is going?”

“Not at all, Minister,” Lucius replied. “You’re considered family by my wife. She’s adapting well, mostly because we’ve completed the Claiming. But I’m sure you can tell she’s still suffering a bit of the insecurities common amongst Omega’s.”

Kingsley nodded. “Yes. It’s to be expected. Well, I won’t keep you from the comfort of the Manor for long. Expect owls to start arriving within the hour contesting your claim. There will probably be more than would be normal simply by virtue of who she is and all she’s accomplished in her young life, but you’ll have no real opposition. Harry’s having them publish a statement from me certifying that I was present at your wedding and that there is no magical coercion involved.”

“Thank you, Kings,” Hermione said. She turned to Lucius. “I’d like to go home now.”

~*~

He drew her a bath, choosing lavender oils to add to the water. He thought the calming scent would help her relax after her trip to the Ministry. Climbing into the tub behind her, he gathered her hair onto the top of her head, secured it with an elastic, and pulled her back against him. He Summoned a flannel and washed her body with soft strokes. She fell asleep in his arms.

She woke alone in bed, confused as to how she’d gotten there. A moment of panic flared inside of her, wondering where her mate was, but she heard the rustle of papers and found him at a table near the windows. A stack of parchment sat before him, and he appeared to be weeding through them.

“Not one claim,” he said.

“Pardon?”

“These are all owls of congratulations on our union. There’s not one claim against our relationship, merely suggestions on how to properly punish the Beta who tried to keep us apart. It’s actually rather amusing.”

Hermione smiled at him sitting there in nothing but his lounge pants. She stood, wrapped a sheet around herself, and walked across the room, sitting in his lap when she reached him. Lowering her head, she met his mouth in a kiss that was at first sensual but quickly turned feral. She moaned when he began to nip at her lips and sighed heavily as he moved to explore her neck and his mark.

“I need you, Lucius.”

“Anything, my love.”

He stood, picking her up easily and carrying her back to the bed. Placing her down near the edge, he climbed over her so they were laying across the bed rather than using it properly. He nipped down her collar bone, down her chest, and sucked a nipple into his mouth, laving at the pebbled flesh with the flat of his tongue.

“I can’t wait until these are feeding our child.”

“Lucius! Please...”

“Patience, my mate.”

Pulling down the front of his bottoms, he took his cock in hand and lined up with her entrance. He hissed as he pushed inside of her, closing his eyes at the exquisite grasp of her walls against his flesh. They moved together, drawing moans, sighs, and eventually screams from each other. When he came, he brought her with him by reaching between them and strumming her clip. They remained joined as he softened inside of her, and groaned as he slipped from her.

“You didn’t knot this time.”

“No,” he realised. “I wonder why that is?”

“I’ll have to research it later, but for now, just hold me.”

~*~

Twenty-four hours passed in much the same way; she would wake in bed alone, find him elsewhere in the room, and go to him. They would kiss, touch, fondle, and eventually end up back in bed. Occasionally, the elves would send food and drinks for them, but they didn’t leave the comfort of Lucius’s bedroom. When Kingsley’s Patronus interrupted their solitude, they knew it was time to get dressed and head back into the public eye. They showered together, Lucius taking her hard and fast against the wall, then got dressed, and Floo’d to the Ministry.

Ron Weasley sat in a holding cell when they arrived, looking smug and unrepentant. Lucius wanted to smack the look off the younger man’s face, but with Hermione pressing in close to

his side, he bit back the urge. Vengeance would come swiftly to the red-head; no matter how good it would feel to hurt him now, there was a time and a place, and this wasn't it.

"Lord and Lady Malfoy!" came the booming voice of the Minister. "I trust there was nothing too terrible in the mail?"

Lucius responded, "Nothing at all, Minister. In fact, I daresay that even I have been advised of new ways to torture that may come in handy when I claim my retribution."

"So, you're choosing a public execution?"

"Definitely not. I'm here to claim him and return to the Manor. What I have in mind may take longer than any person would be willing to watch."

"You don't frighten me," Ron spat.

Lucius turned to him. "Not yet..."

Hermione chuckled, and Kingsley said, "Just be sure to send his remains to his family."

Using his wand, Lucius cast a Compulsion Charm on Ron and led him through the Ministry to the Floos. He thought about making a statement to the people assembled and watching but opted instead for smug satisfaction. Words were beneath him and not a single person in the Wizarding World was unaware of Ronald Weasley's fate, even if they didn't know the methods by which it would be achieved.

~*~ ~*~ WARNING ~*~ ~*~

"Do you wish to watch, my mate?"

She sighed and shook her head. "Part of me wants to. Part of me wants to see him torn limb from limb for what he tried to take from us. Yet he was one of my first friends when I came to Hogwarts. I don't want my last memories of him... Wait..." She paused. "You know what? I will watch. He wasn't always a bad person, but I'm not sure now what I ever saw in him other than he was one of the first people to befriend me. He was rude to me, used me for my smarts, and when the going got tough, he ran." Hermione furrowed her brow and looked away. "Why in Merlin's name would I ever have thought I would have been happy married to him?"

Lucius laughed. "You can stay." He kissed her temple, and the pair descended the steps to the same dungeon room where Molly Weasley had met her maker.

Ron was unconscious, strapped to a simple wooden chair, his shirt, trousers, shoes, and socks removed. A small table stood a few feet from him, laden with various torture devices. Hermione recognised a few of them: Muggle plyers. A scalpel. A flogger with barbed ends. She even saw orthodontic forceps and wondered if Lucius meant to physically remove Ron's

teeth. There was also a hammer, a mallet, and a few different sized knives. She crossed the room and took a seat ten feet from Ron, watching intently as Lucius removed his shirt.

“Rennervate,” Lucius said, waking his prisoner from his sleep. “Time to wake up, Mr. Weasley.”

Ron looked around for a moment, set eyes on Lucius, and spat. “Fuck you, Malfoy.”

“Tsk tsk. I’d cut out your tongue right now if I didn’t want to hear you scream for mercy.”

Ron thrashed against his bonds, discovering quickly that the more he fought, the tighter the ropes became.

“By all means, keep fighting. You’re just making this easier for me.” Lucius moved to the table. “Where to start?”

Hermione watched Ron’s eyes go wide when Lucius picked up the Muggle pliers. She wondered what her mate was planning for only a second before he bent down and began slowly ripping the nails from Ron’s toes. One by one, Lucius tore all ten nails from Ron’s feet, relishing in the screams. After the seventh, Ron had passed out, but Lucius once again cast Rennervate, and brought him back. He let the younger man bleed for a few minutes, waiting until he became pale and almost unresponsive, before he cauterised the wounds and force-fed a Blood Replenishing Potion to the ginger wizard.

“You sick fuck!” Ron screamed; his throat raw. “Hermione, please! Stop him!”

“Nope. Don’t think I will.”

“Mione!!!”

“No, Ronald! You don’t get to plead to me! You lost that right the night you tried to rape me and steal my magic!”

Ron’s face turned puce. “Filthy Mudblood whore!”

He opened his mouth to say something else, but Lucius backhanded him, the sound of shattering bones echoing through the room.

“It would appear you’ve not learned your lesson, and I assure you, this will not end until you do, and you utter a heartfelt apology to my wife.”

“Fuck you!”

Lucius turned to the table again, grasping the orthodontic forceps. He used his wand to secure Ron’s head, opening the young man’s mouth and spelling it to stay open. Then he took the forceps and grasped a molar on Ron’s lower jaw, gripping it with such force that it shattered beneath Lucius’s hands.

“Oops,” Lucius said, and Hermione laughed.

“Not as easy as it looks, huh?”

He turned to her. “And what do you know of it, huh Pet?”

“Well, my parents *are* dentists...” He looked confused, so she explained, “They’re healers for teeth.”

“Right. I’ll just be more careful then?”

She knew he meant it as a joke but winced when he went back and successfully pulled an incisor from the top. He pulled another tooth, she didn’t know which, before he got bored and released Ron’s head and mouth, wisely stepping back before the boy could spit on him again. He used that time to pull a mallet from the table, aiming carefully before using the full force of his body to swing the rubber hammer-like tool directly into Ron’s left knee. Lucius repeated the process on the right knee and then used the tool to shatter the bones in Ron’s forearms.

“Those I’ve been waiting to destroy since you broke Hermione’s arm last year, even before I knew she was my mate. No man would ever hurt a woman in such a way.”

“Fuck you!”

Lucius cocked his head to the side. “Not very inventive, are you? You keep saying the same thing!”

“I’m more of a man than you are, Death Eater scum!”

He raised his left eyebrow. “You think so, hm? We’ll see about that.”

Picking up scissors she hadn’t seen, Lucius cut the fabric of Ron’s pants away, revealing his soft prick. She wondered what he was up to, but knew whatever it was, it would be justified.

Lucius tsk’ed. “Well, this just won’t do.” He aimed his wand at Ron’s crotch and cast *Voluptatem*. *Pleasure*, Hermione thought, and the effect was instantaneous.

Ron threw his head back, hissing through his teeth as his cock filled and grew. The skin moved up and down as if some phantom lover was jerking him off, and a bead of precum appeared on the tip.

“Much better,” Lucius breathed before moving his wand again. “*Sustento*. Can’t have you getting real pleasure from this, now can we?”

Hermione watched as Ron fought against the spell, trying to rock his hips and come but failing. She heard Lucius mutter something which caused Ron’s eyes to bug out of his head a bit. Then she spied her lover pick the Muggle plyers back up and rip out a few fingernails.

Ron was screaming, his voice hoarse and blood collecting at the corners of his mouth. Lucius came up beside him and Vanished the chair, causing Ron to fall onto the floor. He kicked the younger man in the face, shattering the boy’s nose in the process. Then he conjured shackles, fastened them around Ron’s wrists, and Levitated them to the ceiling, leaving Ron hanging

by his hands, his toes barely scraping the floor. Lucius reached over and pulled a hammer from the table, turning it so that the head was in his hand, and walking behind Ron's suspended form.

"Perhaps you should learn what it feels like to be raped," he said, and then he shoved the handle of the hammer up Ron's ass, smiling when Ron screamed out, and blood poured from his backside.

"I'm sorry!" Ron rasped. "I'm so sorry. Hermione, please. I'm sorry. Forgive me. Please."

"Mate?" Lucius called, raising a hand in her direction. "What say you?"

She stood and walked to them, stopping directly in front of her ex. "Oh, Ron. You're not forgiven. Not in the slightest." She turned to Lucius. "Can we go now? I don't want to see him anymore, and I really need you right now."

"Of course, my love." Lucius watched as she walked away, then he turned back to his captive. "I'm a man of my word, Mr. Weasley. You've begged forgiveness, so you shall be released."

"Oh! Thank you!" he cried, seemingly relieved. "Thank you! I just want to go home. Please, let me down. I'll leave right away."

"You misunderstand."

He said nothing else. Instead, he picked up a scalpel with his left hand and paralyzed Ron with his wand. Then he set the wand down and switched hands. "That erection looks rather painful. Tell me, Mr. Weasley, does it hurt?"

Ron baulked. "Let me go. Please."

"Does It hurt?"

"Please!"

"Does. It. Hurt?"

"Yes! Yes, you fucking sadist! Just let me go!"

"I promised to release you, not let you go. And I'm going to release you... from your miserable life."

Ron screamed as Lucius brought the scalpel to the tip of his throbbing cock, pressing it down into the small opening and slicing down the underside and straight through the testicles.

"Felix!" called Lucius.

"Master?"

“When the boys finally bleeds out, send his remains to Arthur Weasley at The Burrow outside of Ottery St. Catchpole. Include our condolences, as well as a letter stating we wish him no ill will and will welcome him into our home whenever he is ready, for he still means a lot to my wife.”

“Yes, Master.”

~*~ ~*~ WARNING ~*~ ~*~

It had taken Ron thirty minutes to succumb to the injuries inflicted by Lucius, yet it only took two days to hear from Arthur. He'd owed to say that he'd buried Ron and Molly in an unmarked grave without any of the magical rights befitting a member of the Sacred Twenty-Eight. For their crimes against Hermione and against magic, Arthur said his son and wife deserved nothing more.

On 22 September 2001, Hermione and Lucius were married before their friends in a ceremony that put the Muggle Royals to shame. Hermione walked down the aisle in a beautiful white mermaid-style gown, escorted by Arthur Weasley, the closest thing to a father she had left. Draco stood beside her as her Man of Honor while Harry stood beside Lucius. They were joined by members of the press who documented the entire affair before leaving the couple and their guests to the reception. *No press allowed*, Hermione demanded, and Lucius relented.

As they were dancing, Hermione whispered to him, “Does this mean you’re going to claim me tonight?”

“Tonight, and every night, Mrs. Malfoy. For as long as we both shall live.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for coming on this journey with me! I truly hope you've enjoyed my little tale. I haven't decided if I'm going to add any side stories to this, but I'm definitely going to revisit this trope with these two characters again at some point. In the meantime, I'm working on an accidental marriage Lumione, as well as a crossover fic with Hermione and Loki!!! Should be fun!

Thanks again for reading! Your comments and Kudos mean the world to me, and I cherish every one.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!